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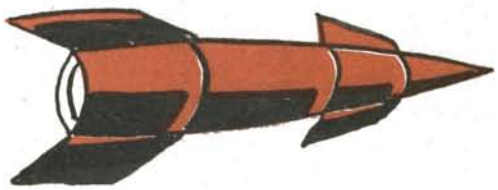
MARCH 22, 1985

Jeffrey Hahn
NOW GORBACHEV

The Editors
COST IN THE STARS

APART TO THE END?

Women & men write about nuclear war
BARBARA L. BAER



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Correspondence

Laughing bells

Washington, D.C.

To the Editors: How nice that you are carrying Robert Bell's funny stories. People will ask you what they have to do with liberation theology, with the crisis of the third world, with staying faithful in dark times. The answer is : nothing — and that is precisely why they deserve a place in your magazine.

Things are grim. We've got at least four more years of nuclear arms race, aid to right-wing dictatorships, double-dipping out of the pockets of the poor, and smiling from the president. It'll take all our strength just to slow down one or two fancy missiles. So let's at least have a few laughs, over something blessedly irrelevant, as we struggle along.

MICHAEL FERBER

The pope & Palestine

Providence, R.I.

To the Editors: It is with a sense of discomfort that I find it opportune, for the sake of the integrity and advancement of Jewish-Christian understanding, which Eugene Fisher serves so effectively, to enter a demurrer to his fine piece on "The Pope and Israel" [January 11].

In his Otranto homily of 1980 Pope John Paul, following his sympathetic expression of concern for Jewish suffering, stated that when Jews created the state of Israel in 1948 ". . . at the same time a sad condition was created for the Palestinian people who were excluded from their homeland. These are facts anyone can see." One observer who cannot see these "facts" is Joan Peters, long-standing expert on the Middle East, who takes issue with the Pope. In her exhaustive study of the origins of the Arab-Israeli conflict in *From Time Immemorial* (Harper & Row, 1984), a 600-page work (with 1800 annotations) written over a seven-year period, she cites the pope as the "definitive example of a perception that pervades the world today" and opines that "the pope is testimony to the effectiveness of the distortions with which Arab propaganda machinery has obscured all existing evidence pertaining to the conflict" (p. 221). The rest of her book proceeds to put definitively to rest the ubiquitous myth that an alien people (Jews) forced an indigenous people (Arabs) from their homeland where they had lived from time immemorial, leaving them to fester in poverty on its borders. With relentless and rigorous detail Peters turns the myth upside-down, proving all parts of it to be even a reversal of the truth and an injustice to Israelis. The book is required reading for anyone who has anything to say about the Arab-Israeli conflict, not excluding papal consultants on the Middle East.

(REV.) EDWARD H. FLANNERY

Religion in Russia

Allemaar, Holland

To the Editors: The mails recently brought several back issues of *Commonweal*. It was good to see them. The review by Frederick Franck [September 7, 1984] of the diary of Etty Hillesum impressed me deeply. . . . Forgive me if I express much less enthusiasm for the article by Janice Broun about Fr. Gleb Yakunin in the same issue, "Unquenched Spirit." This seemed to me a particularly two-dimensional piece: the good guys versus the bad, the good mainly in captivity in the gulag, and the numerous bad guys, government bastards whose spiritual condition can be guessed by the drawing of the guard that accompanied the article. According to Janice Broun the hierarchy of the Russian Orthodox church is "compliant . . . subservient . . . (and) compromised," unable or unwilling to defend the church's persecuted membership. Fr. Yakunin, on the other hand, is notable for his "utter consistency and integrity, his fearlessness, his rejection of compromise, and his quiet determination always to speak the truth" though he is betrayed by bishops and brethren.

I wonder if the virtues Ms. Broun identifies in Fr. Yakunin are as rare as she suggests? I recently met several priests in Russia who deeply impressed me as persons of integrity, intelligence, compassion, dedication, generosity, and holiness. Yes, they approach their difficulties and vocation in a quite different way from Fr. Yakunin. Perhaps they should follow his example, perhaps they find their conscience indicating a different path. I can tell you they do not speak of Fr. Yakunin with the condescension that Janice Broun speaks of them.

One would not sense from Janice Broun's report the many positive results of the quiet way the Russian Orthodox church has been following. There has been steady growth in the church; several priests I talked with who are teaching at seminaries in Russia estimate there are about ten million more people active in the church today than there were ten years ago, and far more younger people than in the recent past. There are about 7500 parishes now functioning — still far too few, but more are opening each year. The largest of the three seminaries has been given permission for a new enlargement. St. Daniel's Monastery in Moscow, long ago confiscated, has now been returned and will shortly be ready for occupation, once the major restoration work is done. About half the children in Moscow are baptized (including many who are the children of Communist party members). About 15 percent of the civil marriages are followed by religious weddings. But perhaps the most telling statistic is that 60 percent of the funerals are religious.

The evidence of religious life in the Soviet Union is not confined to the churches alone. One finds remarkable passages in novels being issued in huge

(Continued on page 191)

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Commonweal

STAR WARS: COUNTING THE COST

THE PRESIDENT has been busy. He has taken up the sword and shield (MX and Star Wars), wielded the budget scalpel, and swung the veto ax. Most recently he has taken up the two-edged sword of Scripture, asserting that Luke 14:31 supports his military buildup. Like the king in Jesus' parable, however, the president himself should take counsel and count the costs. He should begin with Star Wars.

The difficulty, of course, is that there is no one to give counsel. At least not in the president's own circle. Star Wars has become the touchstone of loyalty to the president, and he has made it clear that when it comes to his Strategic Defense Initiative (SDI), he will not be moved. It is not to be a bargaining chip à la MX at Geneva. In fact, as Under Secretary of Defense for Policy Fred C. Ikle told the Senate last month, SDI is "not an optional program" but is "central" to long-range American military plans. It would appear that the administration has already foreclosed meaningful discussions on the most sensitive issue at Geneva.

Why should SDI be questioned, and who must step forward to do the questioning? When Mr. Reagan proposed SDI in March 1983, he said it was to be a research project in keeping with the 1972 ABM treaty. He and Mr. Ikle now indicate otherwise. The president has also put aside his earlier offer to share defensive technologies with the Soviets. He has, in effect, challenged them to a defensive arms race in space, the like of which we have never seen. Yet, loyalty to the president precludes criticism, even the questioning of finances. Leslie Gelb noted recently, "No longer is any official saying publicly what Richard D. De Lauer, former Under Secretary of Defense for Research and Engineering said in 1983 . . . 'Congress will be staggered at the cost.' "

If the aim of SDI is to protect the American population (and those of its allies), we must ask if it will be able to do the job. The answer is no. As Lewis Lehrman, a supporter of SDI, has recently written (*New York Times*, February 19), "Certainly no strategic defense can be perfect." "But," he adds, "a 90 to 95 percent effective defense would dramatically reduce American casualties and leave open prospects of national survival and recovery." The simple logic which seems to escape Mr. Lehrman is that an adversary trying to overcome a 95 percent-effective nuclear defense would substantially increase its nuclear offense. When it comes to nuclear weapons, very few are needed to cause incalculable havoc. If 5 percent of 10,000 Soviet warheads were to strike the U.S., would that leave any "prospect for recovery"? Surely not. For Mr. Lehrman has also failed to take into account (as even a Pentagon report now does) the resulting nuclear winter, and the quite possible extinction of the human race from global effects unrelated to radiation hazards. Yet the Pentagon is so supine it concluded that "the theory had no great policy implication for the Reagan administration."

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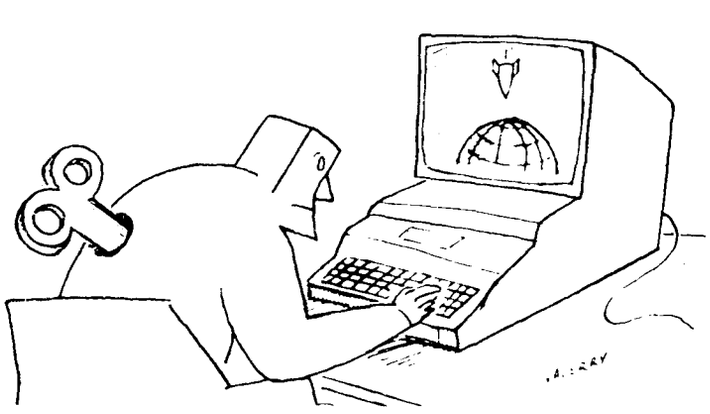
If SDI cannot protect populations, can it still be useful as a "point defense," one that would protect our weapons, allowing us to respond to a Soviet "first strike," and thus deterring such a strike? Such deterrence already exists. The last attempt at defensive nuclear weapons, the Soviet ABM system, led directly to the U.S. MIRVing its offensive nuclear arsenal, an increase of 5,000 nuclear warheads in seven years. In response, the Soviets MIRVed. The result: greater planetary insecurity. Unless both sides were to deploy comparable defenses simultaneously, the side that fell behind might feel so threatened it would start firing before its enemy's new defenses could be deployed. And even if both agreed to proceed together (but of course without sharing technologies), it could take decades of uncertainty to accomplish. Paul Nitze has pointed out such a process would be "tricky" to manage, one for which there is no precedent in recent diplomatic history.

The technical difficulties facing Mr. Reagan's SDI are nearly countless, although they may not be insurmountable. (The Soviets, of course, will be throwing a curve ball at every batter we send up.) But even should our technologists be successful, what will they have wrought? At least two remarkable changes.

First, they will have taken the decision-making process for the fate of the earth out of human hands. Computer software containing something on the order of ten million instructions will be needed for SDI and will have to operate flawlessly. (The final nine minutes of the present space-shuttle launching, on the other hand, take a mere 88,000 instructions.) Yet we are told it is possible to do. However, the speed required for the defensive system will be so accelerated that *Time* reports (March 11) the following scenario: "Humans would make the key strategic decisions in advance, determining under what conditions the missile defense would start firing, and devise a computer system that could translate those decisions into a program. In the end, the defensive response would be out of human hands: it would be activated by computer before U.S. commanders even knew that the battle had begun."

Second, SDI will create a whole new range of *offensive* weapons that could be used with devastating effect. John Rather, vice-president of Kaman Aerospace Co., a laser expert and proponent of SDI, was recently quoted as saying, "A system of space battle stations designed to stop a nuclear attack also may have the potential to attack selected targets in space, in the atmosphere, or down on the surface of the earth" (*New York Times,* March 7). Space-directed attacks against so-called "soft" targets on earth could "take an industrialized country back to an eighteenth-century level in thirty minutes" by starting millions of fires simultaneously across the Soviet Union using satellite-directed laser beams. If the adversary were to deploy a similar defensive shield, it would possess similar offensive potential. In other words, our technology would not only have made us more vulnerable, it also would have taken itself out of our hands. Hans Bethe, the Nobel physics laureate, concludes: "It is difficult to imagine a system more likely to induce catastrophe than one that requires critical decisions by the second, is itself untested and fragile,



and yet is threatening to the other side's retaliatory capability."

What are the costs of SDI economically? The administration is talking about $30 billion for five years of research. John E. Pike of the American Federation of Scientists says that the research will more likely require thirteen years, and cost $100 billion. As for deployment, James R. Schlesinger told the Senate Foreign Relations Committee last month that while total defense is an "illusory plan," even the best we might do would cost "well over half a trillion dollars and probably will exceed a trillion." In January, Defense Secretary Weinberger had said that SDI would also have to be backed up by antiaircraft radar installations and planes which Mr. Schlesinger estimated would cost $50 billion a year on their own. For a nation attempting to slay its present deficit by cutting out Amtrak, postal subsidies, and school lunches, this should guarantee national penury.

Why then have the Soviets come back to Geneva? If they are so afraid of SDI, hadn't we better go ahead with it? Mr. Weinberger answered the first question in December 1983. He said that a unilateral development of an effective Soviet defense "would be one of the most frightening prospects I can imagine." It would utterly upset the present state of "mutual assured deterrence" that has kept such a fragile nuclear peace for forty years. How can we delude ourselves that SDI is not equally frightening to the Soviets? This unsettling quality is coupled in the Soviet mind with the ruinous expense such a race would invite. Yet they have vowed they will not shrink from picking up the gauntlet.

One of the merits of Mr. Reagan's Star Wars speech was that for the first time the president clearly admitted the wisdom of most Americans' fears about nuclear war. He said it was this realization that led him to seek an alternative. If that is so, we must grant the Soviets a similarly reasonable fear. Yet whatever the degree of anxiety, neither power is wise to flail about for false, destabilizing alternatives. SDI is such a leap into the fire.

What then is the road to take, and who will speak for it? Hans Bethe has noted the only possible solution: "We need to try to understand the other fellow and negotiate, and try to come to some agreement about the common danger. This is what has been forgotten. The solution can only be political. It would be terribly comfortable for the president and the secretary of defense if there was a technical solution. But there isn't any."

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And in a government beguiled by a landslide president, who must speak out? The opposition and the churches. Congress must not forget that once before public opinion forced Mr. Reagan back to Geneva when he showed no readiness to be there (1982). Those talks failed. So will the present Geneva parley unless every aspect to be discussed is really negotiable, including SDI. The president is short-sighted when he says of the Geneva talks, "The one who loses is the one who gets tired first." Congress must convince the president that SDI as now envisioned is a well-meaning but hopeless crusade. It must continue to support the findings of its own Office of Technology Assessment, critical of SDI, and use the media to forcefully challenge the president's illusions. It must take the lead as true defenders of our life and liberty.

The churches must speak up, specifically the Catholic church and its bishops. As they questioned SDI and MX last June before Congress, they must do so again with the clearest, most resonant voices. There is some movement already. The Vatican recently editorialized against SDI, and Cardinal Bernardin made criticisms in a recent university speech. Yet, this is still faint response in the face of such a critical question. "The Challenge of Peace" provides the moral groundwork for condemning SDI. When will the bishops speak with full throat? And when will we? It is time for us all to sit down and count the cost.

The Soviet succession

'YURI'S USURPERS'

WHY GORBACHEV MATTERS

KONSTANTIN CHERNENKO is dead, and Mikhail Gorbachev is his anointed successor as General Secretary of the Soviet Communist party. That is about the extent of the news as of this writing — on Monday, March 11. Already, however, Americans are wondering whether it makes any difference. Is there really a kopeck's worth of difference between Gorbachev and Chernenko, or between Gorbachev and the other members of the Politburo who might have been chosen instead of him, in particular his chief "rival," Grigory Romanov?

The answer is yes, at least in terms of their sources of political support.

In general, the political struggle at the top appears to be between those who seek power in order to pursue the systemic reforms begun by Andropov — let's call them "Yuri's usurpers" — and those who are threatened by such changes — the "Brezhnev bureaucrats." Whence this division? The last years of Brezhnev's leadership were characterized increasingly by an inability or unwillingness to confront problems. The rate of industrial growth dropped precipitously after 1975. Agriculture stagnated. Corruption flourished. The war in Afghanistan dragged on inconclusively. The USSR was a ship of state adrift. Andropov is widely admired by Soviets today because he was perceived as someone who wanted to lead society out of this miasma and "get the country moving again." The twin themes of his short tenure were discipline within the bureaucracy and decentralization in managerial decision-making.

Change, however, always threatens those who benefit from the status quo. Thus, both directions were unwelcome to those members of the apparatus who thrived under Brezhnev's policy of benign neglect. Doubtless, a collective sigh of relief from this quarter greeted the announcement that Brezhnev's old friend and personal protégé, Chernenko, would replace the ascetic Andropov.

In this context, Gorbachev appears to have the support of the reformers. With a degree in law from Moscow State University, he is the best-educated member of the Politburo. At 53, he is also its youngest member. When Stalin died in 1953, Gorbachev was still in the university. This means that his political maturation took place during the Khrushchev years, a period when reform was rampant, if not always well considered. Despite his youth, he has considerable seniority, having been made both a full member of the Politburo and a Secretary of the Central Committee in 1978. He holds the agricultural "portfolio" and has spoken admiringly of Hungarian success in using market incentives to stimulate productivity in this area. Finally, he travels well. He demonstrated his ability to deal with Western leaders during his trip to Canada several years ago and during his recent trip to Britain, which was well received there and extensively covered in the Soviet media.

Gorbachev's rise to prominence has not been uncontested, however. His chief rival, Grigory Romanov, has appeared to be the favorite of nervous Brezhnev bureaucrats. Romanov holds the military portfolio in the Secretariat, which runs the Communist party apparatus; this makes him a natural ally of the heavy industrial sector, traditionally strong in the central bureaucracy and resistant to change. Only last December, at the funeral of Defense Minister Dimitri Ustinov, Romanov was highly visible. He organized the funeral and delivered the eulogy, completely eclipsing Gorbachev who had to cut short his visit with Margaret Thatcher to return to Moscow.

The rivalry with Romanov may not necessarily mean that the Soviet leadership will be sharply fractured. In fact, the USSR has repeatedly weathered succession crises much more successfully than many Western observers anticipated. Still, it is only one of several signs indicating the constraints within which Gorbachev must maneuver. Consider, for example, the Central Committee plenary session on agricultural policy held in October, 1984. Gorbachev, the Communist party secretary responsible for agriculture, did not address the session. Instead, two old Brezhnev men, Chernenko and Soviet Premier Tikhonov, set forth a policy of massive land reclamation, a policy already tried, with little success, in the mid-fifties. The more innovative, but also more unsettling, policies advocated by Gorbachev were ignored.

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So does it make any difference that Gorbachev has apparently emerged on top? If this analysis of the divisions in the Kremlin is accurate, there is a good chance that it does. While foreign policy issues are of negligible importance in choosing a successor, I believe that the reformers — headed by Gorbachev — have much to gain and little to lose by pursuing a moderate course in foreign policy.

What incentives for moderation exist for those whom I have labeled "Yuri's usurpers"? Their chief preoccupation will be how to get the economy moving again. As noted, the decline in the rate of economic growth over the past ten years has been dramatic. The reasons are many and varied, but at their core is the maturation of the Soviet industrial base. The character of the economy has been changing, but the overcentralized ministerial structure of economic decision-making differs little from the Stalin years. As long as the sources of economic growth were quantitative, this structure worked well enough. But, in a mature industrial economy, where the sources of growth are increasingly qualitative, such a structure is hopelessly inefficient. The reformers' remedy is to break the ministerial gridlock and transfer more decision-making authority to managers in the field. For the bureaucrats, this would mean the loss of power and, potentially, of position, both so secure in Brezhnev's last years. The prospect of a Gorbachev firmly in charge must be viewed by this group with little enthusiasm.

For decentralization to work, the managers to whom authority is being transferred must be assured that they will not be penalized for taking risks. It is one thing to receive authority, but unless you also have the necessary financial and technical support, your chances of success are slim. Thus, decentralization without adequate capital investment is as likely to fail to stimulate Soviet economic growth as is capital investment without decentralization.

Decentralization is essentially an administrative cure. New technology and recapitalization cost money. These considerations lead from the domestic to the international arena. The search for the capital and technology needed to give the reforms a chance to work could be found by reducing Soviet costs abroad and increasing trade with the West. Some of the rubles being spent to maintain a Soviet presence on the Chinese border, in Eastern Europe, and especially in Afghanistan, could be re-allocated to domestic investment if negotiation prevailed over confrontation in these and other areas of the world where the Soviets have become involved. Clearly, however, the greatest potential gains to be made in re-allocating scarce resources from guns to butter would be an agreement with the United States to avoid a new arms race. Improved relations with the West would also presumably broaden Soviet access to Western technology, a consequence which many Western businessmen would welcome almost as much as Soviet reformers.

What should the U.S. do in the present situation? Nothing. Watch and wait. Talk about arms control in Geneva. Until the dust settles some more, and we know with whom we are really dealing, this is not the time for new initiatives. In any case, it is doubtful that definitive responses will be forthcoming from the Soviet side without a complete resolution of the leadership issue.

After the dust does settle, however, the U.S. should seriously probe the intentions of whoever is in charge. The scenario presented here links Soviet domestic reform with foreign policy moderation. For Gorbachev, the incentives for moderation are compelling. Tangible moves by Gorbachev to improve relations with the West and with the USSR's own neighbors should not be dismissed as tactical devices designed to delude the gullible. Rather they should elicit a willingness to meet the Soviets half-way in the areas of trade, scientific exchanges, and arms control. A presidential invitation to the new Soviet leader to exchange views on these and other issues of mutual concern would also be welcome. If Thatcher can work with Gorbachev, why not Reagan?

Perhaps it is more clear what we should not do. Efforts to exploit the present situation by seeking to reestablish American military superiority (as the Soviets perceive MX, the stealth, "Star Wars," and cruise missiles bomber are intended to do), or to undermine the Soviet system from within will reinforce the Soviet's sense of threat. So does recent talk about breaching SALT II limits on the number of submarine-launched missiles. Soviet reaction will be to further increase military expenditures; it would also strengthen the position of Moscow hard-liners. Neither result is in American interests.

It is also important that the U.S. not harbor unrealistic expectations of the new Soviet leadership. We should divest ourselves of any illusions about their imminent collapse or that they will accept inferior military status. We should recognize the limits on our ability to influence the Soviets domestically. Soviet preoccupation with the domestic economy combined with a more restrained foreign policy would not necessarily result in greater tolerance for domestic dissent. In fact, it may mean the opposite. Nor are the Soviets going to allow a neutral regime in Poland or an anti-Soviet government in Afghanistan. Especially, we must avoid the illusion of détente — never shared by the Soviets — that normalization of relations in some areas means a more or less permanent end to global competition.

In the final analysis what the U.S. and the Soviets do share at this point in time is an interest in reducing the risk of nuclear war and in resolving their economic problems. The achievement of these goals by each would be enhanced by an improvement of relations with the other. Such a solution will not be satisfying to ideologues on both sides who seek either military superiority or moral victory. However, to see Soviet-American relations as a zero-sum game in which one can win only if the other loses will serve only to perpetuate the present sterile confrontation.

JEFFREY HAHN

(Jeffrey Hahn, an associate professor of political science at Villanova University, specializes in Soviet politics and political behavior. He is currently writing a book on locally elected Soviet officials, based on research gathered on his most recent three-month-long visit to Russia during the fall of 1984.)

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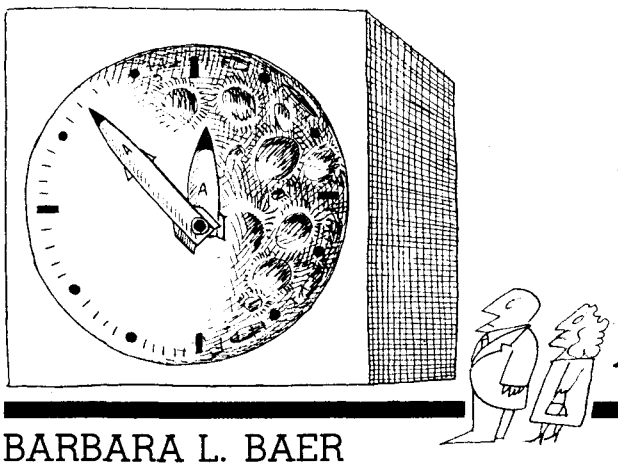

Apart to the end?

BARBARA L. BAER

Men are men, they have reason and weapons.
Jakov Lind
Landscape in Concrete

Counting. They have counted the targets. Of 224 targets they count, 71 were cities. They count the bombs. 128 129 130 They count 263 bombs and 1,446 megatons. 131 132 133 They count the dead to be 42 million. They imagine 42 million to be dead . . .
(Counting. She has counted on this life continuing. She has counted on continuing. Each day she has counted, each day she has done what she must, done what she must to go on.)
Susan Griffin
Woman and Nature

WOMEN WRITING about the prospect of nuclear war and its aftermath, its possibilities for survivors, do so differently from men. Male writers view technology and weapons in a way women do not.

One reason for the different perspective may be the exclusion of women from power when it comes to making the weapons, and deciding on their deployment and use. Even in non-specialist discussions, such as the one which followed television's "The Day After," women were excluded. For the most part, the men on that panel talked about numbers and strategies, dismissing fears of the consequences of the weapons' use — which "The Day After" had underplayed — as an emotional response, having little to do with the serious problems at hand. The panelists did not go so far as to say that fear of world destruction was hysterical or womanish, but there was no woman on hand to dispute the importance of the statistics of nuclear war — statistics that Jonathan Schell has called insane and their makers madmen, "on whose thinking almost no bounds are set and the slaughter of whole populations and the extinction of man are too thinkable."

I trust the reader finds no contradiction in my quoting Jonathan Schell to represent the woman's point of view. Men share the fear of nuclear war and feel disgust towards its makers. However, in their ficiton, men and women perceive themselves as responsible for different aspects of the situation and reveal how differently they think.

Men have had a relationship with weapons over the centuries that women have not. Even when a male author's aim is to evoke the horror of war, the history and technology of its weaponry still fascinate him, often occupying a central point in his narrative. I say this not to condemn the male writer but to show how he takes part of a masculine point of view.

Women, on the other hand, tend to ignore weapons and even leave out descriptions of war itself. One only guesses at it by the extent of its effects. Women see the holocaust primarily in terms of its survivors. And while men write about the effects of war, they intellectualize them in a way women do not. Women writers cut through ideas to summon feeling for the survivors, especially children. There is, simply, a fundamental difference in focus. Only a few authors of post-holocaust fiction explore the issue from both sides: from beginnings to endings, causes to effects. I have chosen a balanced sampling of post-holocaust fiction from the past twenty years, three novels by women and four by men.

THOMAS PYNCHON'S *Gravity's Rainbow* (1973) does not seem to be about nuclear holocaust. It takes place in Germany in the ruins of World War II. However, the seeds for the next war have been planted by the last one. The more primitive V-rockets prefigure the larger, computer-guided missiles carrying nuclear warheads. Americans and Russians are already scrambling for their secrets embedded in the fragments. *Gravity's Rainbow* ends in the 1970s with an unidentified warning siren screaming over the Los Angeles freeways, spreading, "further than any mortal could ever move . . . could move in time."

BARBARA L. BAER *is a writer living in rural California where she divides her time between taking care of her family and editing the newsletter of Women's Action for Nuclear Disarmament.*

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More than anything, *Gravity's Rainbow* is about weapons and why men have been making them since history began. Pynchon describes what we may have suspected all along: a landscape of rockets/missiles resembles nothing so much as male organs lined up ready to be launched. Pynchon's male characters identify with their rockets as if they were part of their own bodies. They feel the power of eruption, the lift-off and penetration of space, the explosion that reaches toward the heart of matter, as if they were taking flight with the machines — as one character literally does, strapped to a rocket.

Most of *Gravity's Rainbow* takes place in the dark, in smoke or mists, which veil the thoughts of men from themselves. "What he felt so terribly, so immediately in his genitals for those rockets each time exploding in the sky . . . to help him deny what he could not possibly admit: that he might be in love, in sexual love, with his, and his race's death."

It may be no revelation that men, and not only military men, identify with and love their weapons, and perhaps even nourish a half-wish to see them go off. Edward Teller has often spoken of the H-bomb as his "baby," almost promising nothing bad could come from it. George Leonard, interviewing military officers connected with nuclear weapons, recorded one man's late-night remark: "Sometimes I just want to get it all over with, one way or the other."

NEVERTHELESS, our faith in human reason, in survival, and in the meaning of our existence, tends to make us think such wishes are aberrations. Here the work of the imagination, the novel, is important because in fiction the demon of many human psyches concentrates itself in a composite character whose background we seem to know intimately: a Teller-like character, such as Pynchon creates, is more believable than Teller himself. In its grainy, crude, no-holds-barred language, *Gravity's Rainbow* strips bare a certain kind of male insanity, showing it for what it is. The book has engaged an unusual group of readers. Computer whizzes and technology men are said to be Pynchon's hard-core audience. Perhaps *Gravity's Rainbow* reflects part of themselves, their deeper motives, the links to their erotic fantasies, and thus has served a salutary purpose. Towards the end of the book, Pynchon suggests the possibility of sublimating the love of rockets and missiles in good Pioneers and Voyagers, rockets men can feel powerful sending into space without the power of destruction in them.

The three novels by women — *The Memoirs of a Survivor* (1975) by Doris Lessing; *Where Late the Sweet Birds Sang* (1976) by Kate Wilhelm; *The Dispossessed* (1974) by Ursula K. Le Guin — contain no weaponry and very little machinery. There are descriptions of devastated cities, landscapes charred and covered by dust or ice, but no rockets or rocket launchers, bomb casings or even secret bunkers, all of which figure in the post-holocaust novels by men. Women haven't seen the weapons themselves as an important part of the ruined world. They have not identified with them, and do not appear even curious about them. What they have seen and identified with is the consequences of the weapons' use: the destruction of Earth.

In the novels of Lessing, Wilhelm, and Le Guin, the end of the world has not come with one big bang. Rather, there has been an invisible trickling of death — radiation, plagues, starvation, social chaos — after an unspecified conflict. The end is more like a fatal pollution than an Apocalypse. Survivors have time to make efforts to save their loved ones, to adapt to conditions for a while longer, to give children a chance for a little more life. Perhaps women's identification with Earth means that a woman writer cannot put the world to death in a few hours of war.

In the three other novels by men — *A Canticle for Leibowitz* (1959) by Walter M. Miller, Jr., *Riddley Walker* (1980) by Russell Hoban, *God's Grace* (1982) by Bernard Malamud — the war which brought about the end of civilization was brief but totally effective. Buttons were pressed, blasts recorded, and Earth was destroyed so swiftly the survivors are still "walking wounded" centuries, even millennia, later. Names of warring nations have been forgotten or mythologized. History has devoured its own tail.

While the survivors in male novels are concerned with retrieving documents and matériel after the war (Hoban's men dig up machinery; Malamud's man rehashes history and retrieves objects; Miller's monks copy texts), the women novelists have their characters concerned first of all with re-establishing a relationship with nature, even if at a subsistence level. Food has to be gotten, warmth provided for, the eye accustomed to pain. Earth is described as a body with a blistered, burned skin, as if it were the characters' own skin.

The men who have survived in *Riddley Walker*, *A Canticle for Leibowitz*, and *God's Grace*, are obsessed with knowing why they have come to this end. The boy, Riddley Walker, narrating his quest across a ruined landscape twenty-five centuries after the war, asks, "Why wil he all ways kill the babby if he can?" What is it about human nature that is so destructive? the boy continually questions, as if by asking an intellectual question often enough, he will get an intellectual answer.

In Walter M. Miller's *A Canticle for Leibowitz*, a community of monks preserves remnants of civilization from the mutants and brigands roaming the land in a second Dark Age, a radioactive, post-holocaust world. The abbot of the monastery continually asks, *Why?* Why are men tied to the wheel of self-destruction? ". . . are we helpless? Are we doomed to do it again and again and again? burned into the oblivion of the centuries. And again and again and again.

"Are we doomed to it, Lord, chained to the pendulum of our own mad clockwork, helpless to halt its swing?"

In *God's Grace*, Bernard Malamud reduces the world's post-nuclear population to one last man who speaks for all humankind to a band of apes. He, too, is obsessed with the question, *Why?*

"If we were to come to this dreadful end, why did the All-knowing God create us?

"Why does human life mean so little to Him? Because He hadn't lived it? If Jesus had, why didn't he tell Him about it?"

God doesn't answer these questioners, and no one comes forth to respond to Riddley's plea. There is a second question

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related to *Why?*: *Who?* Who was responsible? In the men's novels, scapegoats are sought and ritually murdered, long after the war. But there is no satisfaction to killing them, because it does not answer the questions, *Why?* and *Who?* These questions lead to further questions about good and evil, God and the Devil, free will and predestination. They lead everywhere and nowhere. The questioners, all men, torment themselves like a Tantalus, almost within reach of water but unable to drink.

IN THE THREE novels by women, no one poses unanswerable questions. If explanation of civilization's end is sought, a character gives a succinct, specific answer. In Ursula Le Guin's *The Dispossessed*, Earth (or Terra, as Earth is called), has been devastated by wars and pollution. Millennia later, someone from another planet asks why such destruction occurred. The female representative of Earth answers simply, "My world, my Earth is a ruin. A planet spoiled by the human species. We multiplied and gobbled and fought until there was nothing left, and then we died."

Abstract questions are not asked by women writers and their characters. Perhaps the more accustomed role of victim has given women a better insight into the peril of the nuclear holocaust, a more realistic view of it. Perhaps since women did not devise the weapons in the first place, they do not feel responsible for them, experience less need for soul-searching and blaming.

Whatever the reason, women novelists, unburdened by the need to question *Why?*, are freer to ask the concrete question, *What?* What can we do now that this thing has happened? How can we live and make life as bearable as possible for the survivors, the children? Children, in fiction as in life, are the truly innocent. Their suffering is unbearable to us. They are also our posterity. If they die, so in a sense do we. We project ourselves in them. We hope to live on through them. But in the novels by men about the nuclear holocaust, children — like women — don't figure much. Riddley Walker is the closest, but he's already twelve and a man in his tribal world. There's only one female in the novel, a shaman woman. In *A Canticle for Leibowitz*, we see children only at the end, being led onto a spaceship to escape the second nuclear war. The only woman in the novel is a two-headed mutant who may also be a saint in disguise. Like the shaman woman in *Riddley Walker*, she has strange powers — perhaps the only kind of woman men can imagine surviving. In *God's Grace*, the female sex and children are represented by a female chimpanzee and her mutant offspring who is killed. Does the absence of children betray an absence of hope in the survival of the race? Does the fact that men see themselves freer to speculate, to invent language and forms unencumbered by the nagging problems of children and the demands they make, also make them more pessimistic? Are men perhaps more isolated in the imaginary post-holocaust world than women, who find or make a family? The presence of children is a form of hope. Their absence reveals despair.

However painful the destruction of children, of childhood itself, the women writers take this difficult matter as their theme, trying to give us images of what children in the post-holocaust world might be like.

In Doris Lessing's *The Memoirs of a Survivor*, war and its aftermath have sent refugees streaming through the city on their way to the country. The narrator is an old woman who has decided to stick it out in the city. From her window, she watches the mob go by, among them many children. She does not try to save anyone until an orphaned girl is brought to her, forcing her to re-engage herself with others. The girl in turn pities and tries to mother bands of wild children who come out of the sewers at night to scavenge and steal, children without ties to anything.

In Kate Wilhelm's *Where Late the Sweet Birds Sang*, the third or fourth generation of survivors of war and radiation poisoning are groups of parentless children. These children are also lost. They are clones, clusters of beings made in a test tube to ensure survival of an infertile race. They are children without individuality, without thoughts of their own.

Absence of feeling and of individuality are as much a loss of humanity as are savagery and murder. Lessing and Wilhelm, writing about the future of children after a nuclear war, are speaking of the present as well. Our own generation of children is being numbed and harmed and made violent in various ways by the double speak of future/non-future offered them in our current stand-off with doom. Thus, novels of a post-apocalyptic future by women are about what is happening to our children now — as well as what will happen to them if we have war.

Another branch of womens' writing on the post-holocaust theme, which I distinguish from the novels I have mentioned, is feminist science fiction. Here, radical expression of anti-maleness appears. In the writings of Suzy McKee Charnas, Sally Gearhart, Joanna Russ, and others, men are described as unregenerate and unregeneratable, even in the postwar dust. Women must form their own societies free of men, healing themselves and the earth through the use of psychic powers long denied them. In these works there is little hope of reconciliation.

Each year, new novels, stories, essays, poems, and anthologies on the subject of nuclear holocaust appear. As long as nuclear weapons exist, writers will imagine their use and aftermath. Men and women will probably continue to write

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differently about them. But every now and then a writer will turn up who repairs the split vision and engages the warriors and victims in dialogue. Two such novels already exist, one by a woman, the other by a man.

IN URSULA LE GUIN's *The Dispossessed*, one of Earth's weary survivors details the planet's destruction in order that we, the present Earthlings, might be warned of our own folly: "We controlled neither appetite nor violence; we did not adapt. We destroyed ourselves. . . . We failed as a species, as a social species."

Earth, the poisoned planet, was ruined by the misuse of technology. Once poisoned, there was no return. Le Guin is telling us that a hi-tech paradise, where we can push buttons for our comfort and ease, has its own traps: other buttons can be pushed also. The Primal Twins of technology, its use and misuse, are entwined. We on Earth must deal with technology, with our weapons, or face our ruin.

The Dispossessed has the mark of a woman more concerned with the right uses of science and technology than with progress itself. And yet as her hero, Le Guin has chosen a male theoretical physicist and mathematician named Shevik. Shevik is a most unusual scientist, conscious of the ends, the consequences, of his work. He does not live in that dark world of the unconscious, asleep to his own urges, the way Pynchon's scientists do. Shevik combines the "maleness" of abstract, linear thinking with the "femaleness" of emotional foresight, tending more to the latter.

Riddley Walker by Russell Hoban is the most completely realized and aesthetically successful work to date of post-holocaust fiction. It is a visionary, almost seamless work that takes place in the far future, millennia after the holocaust, when things have so thoroughly broken down that all life seems like a hologram in which the picture is unfocused, but where every bit of that picture is spread over every other bit. The world of the future is so completely in pieces that everything is contained in each piece, each memory, each expression, each artifact. Language, like machinery, is strewn about. "If there's a big bang, and civilization goes bust," Russell Hoban has said about the language in *Riddley Walker*, "then we'd have a corrupted vernacular with bits of scientific jargon floating around in it like meat in a stew."

It is hard to imagine a worse collective fate for our race, short of total extinction, than the one Russell Hoban conjures up. He writes no future-romance. Twenty-five hundred years after the war, nothing grows. Ruins of cities are still radioactive. Mutants are ritually murdered. Society consists of small bands of people speaking a demotic tongue who scavenge by day and retreat to huddle behind fences at night, as afraid of what they may see as of being seen. The entire population is up against a collective blankness of mind, like a victim of brain damage who dimly remembers a former self but cannot bring it to light.

If *Riddley Walker* offers a dose of aversion therapy to playing around with ideas of limited war, even with the notion of the beauty of science itself, the novel is not only a warning. It makes us see how durable the human spirit is even when body and land are blighted.

Riddley has turned twelve the day the novel begins. He's barely out of childhood, which he grieves for, as he grieves for a forgiving Mother Earth he did not know, and for all children everywhere who haven't known anything but blackened, poisoned land. In the heart of this grim story, there is a revelation. Riddley discovers Gothic sculpture in an underground crypt. The existence of beauty strikes like a bolt of lightning or a spontaneous mutation. The reappearance of a capacity to think of beauty and hope seems to be an evolutionary step forward from the depths of the post-holocaust quagmire. In the end, Riddley gives himself up to a power greater than himself — not precisely God because both the concept and the word "God" have been lost — but to some power nonetheless. "I cud feal some thing growing in me it wer saying, LOSE IT. Saying, LET GO. Saying, THE ONLYES POWER IS NO POWER."

"The only power is no power." These words are not those of men who follow an instinct to build weapons of destruction, who need to prove their power is greater than nature's. These words come from the feminine side, asking us to love nature, to revere it, to quit meddling.

Riddley Walker has not told us to quit thinking or speaking. Words must keep coming from the heart and the imagination, for when they stop all that will be left is the computer's Counting.

Joan Rohr Myers

After Honey Bees

These zebra-skinned hummers
will go to great lengths
for food in a petal soft place.

I'm never looking for more
than clear color and a flutter
of fragrance, so they shock
me, roaring in
like the New York Central
through a tunnel of softness.

It's dangerous to speak, or lean
with aggression into their
circle, so I wait for the signal
common in nature, of leaving behind
what you've already used.

When I'm finally alone
my hands fold 'round the stem
with a tentative trust, I close
my eyes and inhale
whatever sweetness is left
in this world.

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THE PROBLEM ISN'T INFORMATION BUT PRECONCEPTION

How to misunderstand Central America

PETER D. BELL

WITH EACH succeeding month, the United States becomes more entangled in Central America. Since the Sandinista triumph in Nicaragua in July 1979, we have raised our annual commitment of military and economic aid to the other four countries of the region from $150 million to more than one billion dollars. The *New York Times* has reported that the administration is considering a request for $172 million more for El Salvador this fiscal year. Last month President Reagan began pressing his campaign to renew congressional funding for the rebel forces in Nicaragua, and virtually advocated the overthrow of the Sandinista government. Up to 500,000 Central Americans have sought refuge in the United States, and thousands more will follow them if denied peace and hope in their homelands. We have been forced into a growing awareness of the isthmus connecting North and South America, where a population one-tenth that of the U.S. occupies one-twentieth of our land mass.

Our increased awareness of Central America, however, has not been accompanied by a similar advance in our understanding of either the countries or the peoples of the region. The lack of understanding among the general public may be distressing, but among those who are formulating U.S. policy it is downright dangerous. Already it may needlessly be widening and prolonging the conflicts in the region, increasing the number of lives lost, properties destroyed, and hopes dashed.

Despite the deep U.S. involvement in Central America, we and our policymakers are continually surprised by critical events and changes. We did not, for example, anticipate President Duarte's initiative to bring the Salvadoran guerrillas into peace talks. We were caught off guard when the Sandinista government agreed to accept the regional peace plan as drafted by the Contadora countries. We were taken aback when the Costa Rican government rejected U.S. entreaties to build up its armaments, and when Honduran army officers cashiered their pro-U.S. commander even while seeking increased U.S. military assistance. We find it similarly difficult to explain why the U.S.-backed *contras* have had so little success in their war against the Sandinista government; and why the views of Central America's nearest neighbors, including Mexico, are so different from those of the United States regarding the region's conflicts and how to resolve them.

The problem is not lack of information. The barriers to an informed understanding of Central America in the United States are more formidable. They have to do with the way we as North Americans look at the rest of the world. The barriers derive from preconceptions and prejudices that shape the way we interpret the information we receive. In the case of Central America, these barriers include the following:

First, we do not appreciate the importance for Central Americans of the history of their region and of the long U.S. involvement there. Central America exists for us in terms of its current crises which we too often assume began with the Sandinista revolution in Nicaragua in 1979. While we discount the past, Central Americans are ever mindful of the sixty military interventions by our country in the Caribbean basin over the past 150 years, some twenty-five of them in Central America during this century.

For Nicaraguans, the U.S. occupation during two decades beginning in 1912 is part of present reality, even if easily forgotten by most of us. How many of us know what every Nicaraguan schoolchild learns: that an American filibusterer named William Walker seized control of that country's government in the 1850s, obtained diplomatic recognition from the United States, and, among other things, legalized slavery?

So, too, Hondurans, including those who may feel the need for protection from U.S. troops engaged in maneuvers there, still smart from having once been a virtual colony of the United Fruit Co. — the original banana republic. And Guatemalans, prodded by the United States to elect a civilian president by the end of this year, cannot forget the CIA-orchestrated overthrow of their last democratically-elected president in 1954. Our impatience with Central Americans who insist on putting a heavy burden of history onto their relationship with the United States only adds to their uneasiness about us.

Second, we assume that political and social relations have gone largely unchanged in the countries of the region. From the vantage point of our predominantly Protestant, Anglo-

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Saxon culture, we still look at Central America as a collection of pre-Reformation Catholic societies and see them as rigidly absolutist, hierarchical, and fatalistic. Such stereotypes may once have contained some truth, but they are certainly not accurate today. The small nations of the region are increasingly complex, with tradition and change combining in ways that are sometimes creative and sometimes jarring. Whatever may have become of the Sandinista revolution, the overthrow of the Somoza dictatorship resulted from one of the few broadly-based insurrectionary movements in the history of this hemisphere.

Among the most far-reaching institutional changes within the region over recent years have been those in the church. Since the Latin American bishops' conference at Medellin, Colombia in 1968, the church has become the defender of the poor and defenseless, the champion of human rights and social justice. One result is that the triad of church, army, and oligarchy, which once kept a lock on power in Central American societies, has been broken forever. Moreover, to varying degrees in El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras, the army has distanced itself from the oligarchy, and now exists as an increasingly independent center of power. Costa Rica disbanded its army in establishing its democracy, and Nicaragua destroyed its oligarchy while making its revolution. Everywhere power has become more fluid.

Third, we tend to attach too much significance to economic growth as a measure of progress in Central America, as elsewhere. In the 1960s and 1970s, there was — thanks in part to U.S. assistance — a great deal of economic growth in the region; but income also became more skewed in most countries, thereby worsening the inequality between rich and poor. Within Nicaragua, El Salvador, Honduras, and Guatemala, added wealth did not lead to social progress or political change but to increased division and frustration. When peaceful efforts to promote social and political reforms were repressed, the most committed reformers were left with rebellion as their only alternative for political action. We should not be so fixated on economic growth that we underestimate the importance of demands for other social change. Economic growth, by itself, is a necessary but not a sufficient condition for development.

Fourth, we fail to comprehend the extent to which the asymmetry in power between the United States and Latin America shapes perceptions both north and south of the Rio Grande. Latin Americans are very much aware of the preponderant weight of the United States in this hemisphere — our economic strength, our military might, and the sheer size of our country. They know that a one percent increase in interest rates here can cost them more than $1 billion in debt service payments. Changes of a few pennies in U.S. prices for coffee, sugar, or bananas mean millions of dollars to the economies of Central America. U.S. policymakers talk about the increased interdependence between the United States and Latin America, but the relationship remains lopsided.

The United States looms very large, a veritable colossus, for the small nations of Central America. By contrast, except in moments of crisis, U.S. policymakers take Central America for granted. Given the relative weakness of the region economically and militarily, the United States maintains a wide margin for error in its policies. Inattention and miscalculation apparently cost us little. But they do lead to deepening resentment toward this country in the region — a resentment on which our adversaries capitalize.

Fifth, issues involving Central America capture the consciousness of most North Americans only in so far as they are infused with an East-West dimension. The Reagan administration's preoccupation with Soviet expansionism causes it to see the current conflicts in Central America as part of a worldwide confrontation, thereby further diverting it from the realities of the region. Even our friends in Central America view with a jaundiced eye the recent rediscovery of their region by this country.

In the aftermath of the Sandinista revolution in Nicaragua, the United States has made a great fuss over the establishment of democracies in the region, putting our prestige and resources on the line. But President José Napoleón Duarte and Guillermo Ungo, the political leader of the rebel forces in El Salvador, must occasionally wonder where the United States was in 1972 when they were duly elected president and vice-president of that country. If the United States had supported democracy then, we might have prevented the military from stealing the election and spared El Salvador its current grief. In 1972, however, we saw no Communist threat in Central

Sandinistas & contras

THE REAGAN ADMINISTRATION'S campaign to win congressional support for the rebels fighting against the Sandinista government in Nicaragua illustrates some of the misconceptions built into United States policy toward Central America. Ultimately, the disregard for Central American realities is likely to come back to haunt the administration in the form of failed policies in the region, and disillusionment among our own citizens.

The overriding preoccupation of the administration with the East-West struggle has caused it to exaggerate the vices of the Sandinista regime. President Reagan has accused it of having turned Nicaragua into a "totalitarian dungeon," and Secretary of State George P. Shultz has warned that the country is "slipping behind the Iron Curtain."

In point of fact, the Sandinistas *have* established political and security ties with Cuba and the Soviet Union, pushed Indians out of their ancestral lands, turned mobs loose on political critics, censored the opposition press, and curtailed freedom of religion. For all of their flaws, however, the recent Nicaragua elections resulted in a Nationl Assembly with a third of its members from the

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America. Our overriding concern with Communism today diverts attention from the deeper realities of the region — the struggles for economic development, social justice, and national self-determination.

Sixth, we too readily allow domestic U.S. politics to shape our understanding of Central America. Issues of life and death significance within the region are exploited for electoral or bureaucratic advantage here. Eden Pastora, the Nicaraguan rebel leader, recently quipped, "The Americans make North American politics out of Nicaraguan politics." He was specifically referring to the battle between the Reagan administration and Congress over the wisdom and legality of CIA support for anti-Sandinista guerrillas, but he might have been describing the treatment of any number of issues. Thus, for example, the question of conditioning U.S. assistance to El Salvador on human rights grounds is at bottom as much an expression of congressional distrust of the Reagan administration as a concern about Salvadoran lives.

Then, of course, there are those Americans on the left and on the right for whom Central America is a reenactment of the Vietnam drama. They interpret each issue in El Salvador or Nicaragua as an opportunity to validate the lessons they learned from the war in Indochina. A consistent refrain of Assistant Secretary of State for Inter-American Affairs Langhorne A. Motley is, "No more Cubas, and no more Vietnams."

Reagan administration strategists talk about U.S. credibility around the world being at stake in Central America. Hardly anyone can doubt, however, that the United States has the economic and military power to prevail in the region if we commit ourselves to do so. During recent visits to Europe and South America, I found that our friends and allies there were worried about U.S. credibility in a different sense. They are concerned not about our resolve to resist Soviet expansionism in our own backyard but about our capacity for farsighted leadership and genuine cooperation in this hemisphere.

"The contra of my enemies is my friend."

Our prejudices and preconceptions are part of our problems in Central America — and part of Central America's problems

opposition. The Sandinista regime may be well on the road to dictatorship, but it is not so brutal or thoroughgoing to qualify as "totalitarian."

By labeling the regime as such, the administration has foreclosed its own policy options. It has felt compelled to undermine or discredit every Sandinista proposal for either an internal political opening or a regional settlement, rather than putting them to the test. Thus the elections, which might have been the wedge for a political opening, as in El Salvador in 1982, were simply put down by Secretary Shultz as a "Soviet-style sham."

Since the administration has concluded that accommodation with the Sandinistas is unthinkable, war is the principal alternative, and the anti-Sandinista rebels are the administration's chosen instruments. But the administration has always underestimated the resentment among Nicaraguans toward the former members of the National Guard, an important element of the Honduran-based rebels. Created by the U.S. Marines during their occupation in the 1920s and early 1930s, the Guard symbolizes the Somoza dictatorship. The presence of ex-guardsmen undermines the legitimacy of the rebels even among opponents of the Sandinistas. It is also a major cause of the continuing division between rebel factions.

Secretary of State Shultz has testified that "the future of democracy is precisely what is at stake in Latin America. If we abandon those seeking democracy, the extremists will gain and the forces of moderation and decency will be victims." Like other Central Americans, however, Nicaraguans long ago became wary of the U.S. equation between elections and democracy. They witnessed too many U.S.-sponsored elections for the maintenance of their "facade democracy" of the past. Nor are they reassured when an administration official states that the presiden "would like to see Nicaragua become a democracy *again*." Just as in the good old days under the Somozas?

Finally, many advocates of genuine democracy in Nicaragua are troubled by the short shrift the U.S. has given to the efforts of the countries on the periphery of Central America, the so-called Contadora group, to bring about peace in the region. Disregarding the attempt of Latin Americans to take responsibility for their own problems, the Reagan administration has fallen back on unilaterally imposed pressure and military force against the Sandinistas. Central Americans know from the last century and a half of their history that U.S. intervention is not the solution to their problems, but the start of a new cycle of difficulties. They understand what we have trouble recognizing: that the United States is a major protagonist in the region, and that our country cannot simultaneously be its mediator.

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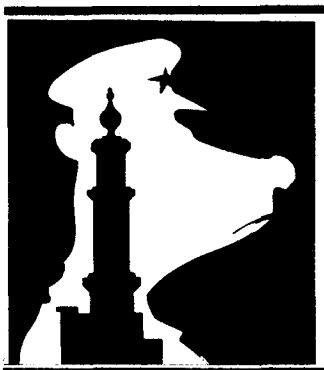
as well. Unless we are prepared to rid ourselves of the barriers to understanding Central America in its own terms, our role there will in the end be destructive — both for Central Americans and for the United States.

The full burden of misunderstanding and miscalculation in U.S.-Central American relations does not rest with the United States. Central Americans and other Latin Americans have often failed to understand either our responsibilities as a world power or the competing interests and contradictory values at work within U.S. politics. So, too, Central Americans have sometimes complained about our insensitivity or unilateral imposition while failing to assume greater responsibility for their own affairs. Nevertheless, Daniel Oduber, a former president of Costa Rica, has cogently argued the case for greater respect for Central American views in handling U.S. aid to the region. "The dead," he states, "are our (Central American) dead; the weapons are all foreign." It is the United States that has decided to play a major role in Central America. Thus we bear a special responsibility to understand what we are doing in the region, why, and with what consequence.



SOARING BIRTH RATES & SECRET SOCIETIES

Mosque & Kremlin

JANICE A. BROUN

THE SOVIET UNION is now the fifth largest Muslim country in the world. But Soviet Muslims represent an increasing area of instability for the Soviet Union on its southern borders. Whereas the Soviet Union's Slav population is barely replacing itself (abortions exceed live births), Muslims, treasuring the gift of children, maintain a birth rate two-and-a-half times that of the rest of the USSR. In the last census of 1979, Muslims numbered 44 million, one-sixth of the population.

Soviet Muslims comprise thirty diverse national groups, most of whom were only conquered during czarist colonial expansion of the last century. Previously these groups were isolated and often mutually hostile, with Islam being their only uniting factor. Statistics reveal that today about 80 percent of Soviet Muslims practice their faith, a far higher proportion than any other major religious group in the Soviet Union. Yet the number of mosques permitted, probably fewer than five hundred, is far lower than the number of places of worship allowed to any other state-recognized religious group. This figure must be compared with the number of mosques before the Revolution: twenty-six thousand. During the period of relative tolerance towards religion after World War II, Muslims had up to seven thousand mosques. But Khrushchev's drastic campaign against religion between 1960 and 1964 reduced the number of mosques to the present low figure. All Koranic schools — fourteen thousand in 1912 — were closed; Muslim Shariat courts had been replaced by secular Soviet courts in the twenties during a concentrated clamp-down on religion. In 1927 women were forcibly emancipated by law. Armed Muslim resistance was ruthlessly stamped out.

Today there are less than two thousand mullahs as compared with forty-five thousand in 1912. Only two out of 450 *medressahs* (seminaries) remain, and these are geared to train administrators in the four Spiritual Directorates, men who will become unofficial diplomats to the Muslim world serving the interests of the Soviet government. (The Directorates administer the four main Muslim areas: European Russia and Siberia; North Caucasus and Dagestan; Transcaucasia, which includes Georgia and Azerbaijan; Central Asia and Kazakhstan.) Korans are difficult to come by. Only six inadequate editions have been published since the Revolution. Few Soviet Muslims ever make the pilgrimage to Mecca. Outwardly they seem to conform to the requirements of Soviet life. They attend schools where Marxism and atheism are propagated, work in state factories and on collective farms. Some become professionals. Many join the Communist party. In face of all this, how have they managed to remain Muslims?

SOVIET MUSLIMS remain apart. They make no attempt to integrate with the non-Muslim communities who have settled among them. There is virtually no intermarriage. They refuse the lure of better-paying jobs in other regions with acute labor shortages. Apart from the more sophisticated and westernized European Tatars, conquered in the sixteenth century, who practice a reformed Islam, the Muslim peoples were largely primitive. Even today most are country folk who preserve strong community structures and oral traditions, safeguarding the stability of family life in its religious setting against the erosive pressures of a materialist, secularized soci-

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ety. Inwardly, they remain Muslim in outlook if not always in deep religious conviction. In one local survey it was discovered that as many as 40 percent of those practicing Muslim rites such as circumcision, religious marriage, and burial in exclusive Muslim cemeteries were not believers. Islam is very much a way of life as well as a religion, with simpler, more clear-cut demands than Christianity. Currently, however, full commitment to Islam is on the increase because of the continuing existence of a "parallel," unofficial Islam — resourceful, adaptable, and outside Soviet control.

During the 1970s the percentage of people of Muslim background on the Central Committees of the Central Asian Republics increased in proportion to the growth of their Muslim population. (Haidar Aliyev, First Secretary of the Communist Party in Azerbaijan, is now a member of the Politburo.) At local levels, Soviet officials, relying on local personnel, ignore the activities of thousands of self-appointed unregistered mullahs (clergy are supposed to be registered with the state) who continue to teach the Koran, sometimes on state property. These officials also wink at the existence of thousands of illegal mosques. Teaching religion to minors is a punishable offense. Many Christians have gone to prison for violating the law. But in Muslim areas until the present, religious persecution has been a rarity. This explains why the leaders of the Directorates, apparently the most docile religious administrators in the Soviet Union, were prepared to accept without comment the minimal facilities allowed for worship. They are well aware that most of their people's needs are adequately provided for by "parallel" Islam. In this, *tariqas* are particularly important.

The "*tariqa*" is the institution which has done the most to keep the flame of Islam burning. The *tariqas* are mystic Sufi secret societies which originated during the Mongol invasions, and have spread under Communist rule. Faced with an alien regime, many devout Muslims have taken refuge in these brotherhoods which are ideally equipped to teach and maintain Islam under persecution. They demand total loyalty from their adherents. They also fulfill important emotional needs. Adepts may take part in exotic rituals which include trance-like states of ecstasy. Each *tariqa* is autonomous. There is no central organization. These societies are experienced and prepared, if necessary, to practice *taqiya*, a custom which permits apostasy in times of extreme danger. The KGB, usually so skillful in infiltrating and crushing underground groups, has met its match. Some are fanatically anti-Russian and promote the spirit of the *jihad* or holy war. In two areas in particular they are causing the government immense concern.

One is the North Caucasus, especially the Chechen-Ingush Autonomous Republic, where 60 percent of the people are *tariqa* members. The whole people were deported following an uprising in 1941-43. Later they were allowed to return, but although there are half a million of them, they were not permitted an official mosque until 1978. Five mosques opened in 1979 and 1980, after the fall of the Shah of Iran—a reflection of Soviet sensitivity to the increasing power of Islam in the world outside. They are perhaps the most devout Muslim people in the Soviet Union, and are staunchly anti-Soviet. One radical *tariqa* has its own criminal courts, its own budget, a network of Koranic schools and clandestine prayer houses, its own self-defense group, and has engaged in terrorist activities. One leader, who remained at-large for over thirty years, had murdered forty Communists. In an article in the Moscow periodical *Zhurnalist* in January 1981, a local official complained that "fanatics" were bullying and persecuting Russian teachers and other members of the intelligentsia, and that "certain clerics and sectarians play on the confusion between national and religious feelings to inflame fanaticism and xenophobia."

The second is the Kirghiz Soviet Socialist Republic, where, by using *taqiya*, a militant group, the Order of the Hairy Ishans, has gone underground since 1963. This group is strongly suspected of the little-publicized 1980 assassination of Sultan Ibrahimov, chairman of the Kirghiz Council of Ministers. No explanation was ever given, and no assassin ever arrested. Soviet authorities denounce clandestine organizations as dangerous and make examples of party members who are *tariqa* leaders. But they appear to be making little headway in abolishing such groups.

THE GOVERNMENT is extremely worried by the significant increase of interest in religion among groups previously most affected by secularism and atheist indoctrination, the intellectuals and the young. A survey of young Chechen-Ingush showed that 20 percent carry out their full religious obligations as scrupulously as external conditions permit. This revival reflects the resurgence of Islam in the world at large, particularly the revolution in Iran just across the Soviet border and the Caspian Sea.

For decades, Soviet Muslims were effectively sealed off from contacts with the outside world, except through the official representatives of the Spiritual Directorates. By invading Afghanistan, the Soviet government has compounded its religious problem. There are now twenty-five thousand Afghan students in the Soviet Union. Some are Communists, but many are Muslims. Many speak Uzbek. They can explain to Soviet Uzbeks the motives and actions of the Afghan Mujahideens and enlist sympathy for them.

The Jamiat-e Islami, a major Afghan resistance movement, now claims to have twenty-five hundred card-carrying members over the border in Tadzhikistan, enough to provide the nucleus for an active nationalist religious resistance movement within the Soviet Union itself, a development which could possibly threaten Soviet control over its Muslim borderlands. There is a growing national awareness among Muslim intellectuals. Some now profess a much deeper respect for the ordinary people, the "Kara Khalq," who have kept the faith better than they. In March 1981 Kazakhs in Alma-Ata demonstrated against the burial in a city cemetery of Kazakh soldiers killed in Afghanistan; they demanded Muslim funeral rites and burial. They got their way.

The government is reacting to this mood of defiance in

(Continued on page 179)

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THE HUMAN FAMILY UNDERSTANDING OTHER PEOPLE

(formerly Books for Brotherhood)

Children's and Young Adults' List

EACH YEAR a representative committee draws up a list of books for children and young adults, books that best portray relationships among people of different origins, races, and religions. The complete list, selected from books published from August 1983 through July 1984, is meant to cover a wide range of ages, interests, and readability. The following selection from the complete list is presented by the publishers named below.

Baseball's Great Experiment: Jackie Robinson and His Legacy, *by Jules Tygiel. Vintage Press, 1984. $7.95*
Centered around the moving story of Jackie Robinson, this thorough, readable account of the desegregation of baseball recreates an important era in American sports and social history. Based on interviews, newspaper accounts, and personal papers, it traces the courageous role of the Black player from the old Negro leagues through the painfully slow process of integration in the major leagues. (14 and up)

The Best Bad Thing, *by Yoshiko Uchida. Atheneum, 1983. $9.95*
A vivid picture of a Japanese-American community in California in the 1930s emerges here. The customary intimate style of the author brings us close to the family circle of Rinko, who reluctantly spends the summer with a widowed family friend. In addition to acquiring virtues of sharing and denial of the comforts she enjoys in the city, Rinko has to live with the eccentric old woman, two unfriendly children, and a mysterious boarder on the old farmhouse property of Mrs. Hata, her parents' friend. It is essentially the universal story about a child's growth and maturity as well as a glimpse into a distinct ethnic culture in the United States. (9-11)

Bicycle Rider, *by Mary Scioscia. Harper & Row, 1983. $9.95*
A fictionalized account of young Marshall Taylor, nicknamed Major Taylor, a Black who became the world's fastest bicycle rider in the late 1890s. After his brother, Walter, gives him an old bike, Marshall finds a job in Hay and Willit's bicycle shop. Mr. Hay takes him to see a bicycle competition and he gets to enter a race. Eventually, after long, strenuous practice sessions, he wins a gold medal. A realistic, interesting picture of the first Black person to participate in national bike races from 1896 to 1910. (7-11)

Children of War, *by Roger Rosenblatt. Doubleday, 1983. $13.95*
Interviews with young people from war-torn Ireland, Israel, Lebanon, Cambodia, and Vietnam form the core of this unique and powerful book. These "children of war" who have coped with losses, suffering, and death, nevertheless leave the reader feeling hope rather than despair. An unforgettable reading experience. (14 and up)

A Deaf Child Listened, *by Anne E. Neimark. Morrow, 1983. $8.50*
The biography of Thomas Gallaudet, pioneer in education for the deaf and developer of American Sign Language. Gallaudet, not deaf himself, dedicated his life and career to improving the educational opportunities and therefore the quality of life for deaf people. His legacy of love and concern live on with the growth of schools and programs for the deaf, and the resulting successes of deaf people in our hearing world. (11-13)

Do You Love Me, Harvey Burns?, *by Jean Marzollo. Dial, 1983. $12.95; paperback $2.25*
Harvey and Lisa meet at school and form a friendship that is special to both of them. Lisa begins receiving anti-Semitic notes attacking her because Harvey is Jewish. She is frightened by the notes and then troubled to discover that the sender is none other than Harvey, uncomfortable with their relationship and his own feelings about being a Jew. A disturbing, thought-provoking book. (12-14)

Everett Anderson's Goodbye, *by Lucille Clifton. Illustrated by Ann Grifalconi. Holt, 1983. $9.95*
In a disarmingly simple picture book with striking illustrations, the poetic text leads us through a small child's experiences to the various stages of grief after the death of his father. There is described the denial, anger, bargaining, depression, and acceptance — all at the level of the child. This is a book that could be shared by adults with children. (5-8)

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Here Come the Purim Players, *by Barbara Cohen. Lothrop, 1984. $12.00*
"Today is Purim, Tomorrow — no more. Give us a groshen, And show us the door." This was the last song the Purim players sang in their depiction of the story of Queen Esther's triumph over Haman. "The narrow streets of the Prague ghetto are empty now, and silent," ends the book, but no explanation is given of what happened in Prague. The characters of the play are introduced as they enter Reb Zalman's house, and, when the play commences, the actors reenact the story of how Queen Esther saved her people. A colorfully illustrated story. (6-9)

Holding Up the Sky: Young People in China, *by Margaret Rau. Lodestar, 1983. $12.50*
This series of varied portraits offers a lively look at the interests, hopes, and dreams of young people in China today. From Wang Meiling, who is looking for a husband at a Shanghai dating service, to Gu Ernang, who wants to join the army to escape the bordeom of farm life, young Americans will find much in common with their counterparts in a once hidden country halfway around the world. (12-14)

I'm on My Way Running, *by Lyn Reese. Avon, 1983. $4.95*
A collection of poetry and prose from around the world celebrating a girl's passage from childhood to adulthood. Through the words of women, some famous, some unknown, we better understand and honor the coming of age of half of the human family. (14 and up)

In a Class by Herself, *by Ivy Ruckman. Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1983. $12.95*
As part of her probation plan, Dyna has been allowed to transfer to a "good" high school -- but commits one more burglary to pay an unexpected registration fee. Just as her work seems to be going well and she is able to help her grandmother and other senior citizens through her inspiring creative writing class, her last crime catches up with her. Several well-drawn characters and a convincing picture of change in a basically decent young girl. (12 and up)

In the Mouth of the Wolf, *by Rose Zar. Jewish Publication Society, 1983. $10.95*
The moving true story of a nineteen-year-old Jewish girl who survives the Nazi occupation of Poland by hiding "in the mouth of the wolf." Traveling alone with false papers as Wanda Gadji, Rose works as a laundress, cleaning woman, and nurse's aid and finally spends the last years of the war in the precarious position of housekeeper for a feared SS officer. (11-14)

Invisible Men: Life in Baseball's Negro Leagues, *by Donn Rogosin. Atheneum, 1983. $14.95*
In this fascinating portrait of an illustrious chapter in Black history, such legendary figures as Satchel Paige, Josh Gibson and Buck Leonard come alive along with scores of lesser-known stars, proving that there was indeed first-class baseball outside of the White major leagues. At the same time, it explodes many myths, exposing the blatant racism faced by the players, the role of racketeers in bankrolling the Negro leagues, and the real motives that led Branch Rickey to be the first owner to integrate a major league team. (14 and up)

Lemon Swamp and Other Places, *by Mamie Garvin Fields. Free Press (Macmillan), 1983. $16.75*
A memoir of South Carolina by a ninety-year-old Black woman. Mamie is the daughter of a slave raised in a middle-class family after slavery. She tells us what Charleston was like socially before and after Jim Crow. We learn what rural life was like, and visit with Mamie in her one-room schools on John's and James' Islands. We see how Blacks survived and progressed within their "separate but equal" churches and schools, and the help of strong family and community ties. (14 and up)

Lillian Wald of Henry Street, *by Beatrice Siegel. Macmillan, 1983. $12.95*
Best known for her establishment of the Henry Street Settlement and the Visiting Nurses, Lillian Wald (1867-1940) was also a leader in movements for peace, women's and children's rights, labor, and world health during her long career. Utilizing original sources, the author has constructed a vivid portrait of this fascinating, unique woman. (12 and up)

Married to a Stranger, *by Nahid Rachlin. Dutton, 1983. $13.95*
Minou, 18, having graduated from high school, marries her former English teacher whom she loves. The rapture of marriage gives way to frustration as Javad's writing for a revolutionary press separates them. Finally, the marriage ends and Minou tries life as a student in the U.S. The author captures the torpor of life in a small Iranian town, the unchanging routine, and the repressive customs. (14 and up)

Paula K. Lazrus Library of Intergroup Relations Selected by . . .
Edith G. Selig, Supervisor
Joseph Benkovitz, Librarian, Springfield Gardens High School
Bertha Cheatham, Associate Editor, School Library Journal
Ruth Rausen, Coordinator of Young Adult Services, The New York Public Library
Barbara Rollock, Coordinator of Children's Services, The New York Public Library
Roslyn Rubinstein, Head of Young Adult Division, Central Library, Queens Borough Public Library
Carol Wadsworth, Librarian
Brooklyn Public Library, Midwood Branch

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Molly's Pilgrim, *by Barbara Cohen. Lothrop, 1983. $9.00*
At a new school, Molly finds she is the only Jewish girl in her third-grade class. The other children find Molly's English strange and they make fun of her. Thanksgiving provides an opportunity for the teacher to explain that there are modern-day Pilgrims too. The biblical harvest of Sukkoth may have inspiried the Mayflower pilgrims to hold their Thanksgiving. In the end, Molly begins to make friends with her classmates.

My Friend Leslie: The Story of a Handicapped Child, *by Maxine B. Rosenberg. Photographs by George Ancona. Lothrop, 1983. $9.50*
The author's daughter talks about her friendship with Leslie, who suffers multiple disabilities (both visual and physical), but nevertheless is a good friend, a natural comedian, and a good reader. Leslie had adjusted to her mainstreaming in school as depicted in Ancona's photographs of the warm relationships the children share. (7-9)

Rebels of the Heavenly Kingdom, *by Katherine Paterson. Lodestar, 1983. $11.95*
In a long but absorbing saga, Paterson traces the missionary influence on a band of Chinese rebels under the Manchu regime. The hero, Wong Lee, becomes part of the rebellious group led by a strong feminine and feminist protagonist, Mei Lin. Her feet are not bound as is the custom; she shares equally with the men, and is aggressive and vocal. Set in the 1850s, it is a rousing adventure story with an interesting view of how a different culture might accept and interpret Christian principles and doctrine. (12-14)

Rebound Caper, *by Thomas J. Dygard. Morrow, 1983. $9.50*
When Garry Whipple gets playing time on his high school basketball team, he turns everything into a joke. Finally, Garry is suspended, and to get even, Garry joins the girls' team. His girl friend turns against him; the boys' team starts to lose, and Garry realizes he is hurting everyone with his immaturity. Good sports action. (12-14)

The Sign of the Beaver, *by Elizabeth George Speare. Houghton, 1983. $8.95*
Survival in the Maine wilderness of the 1700s is hazardous for 13-year-old Matt, left to tend the family cabin and land claim until his parents and younger siblings join him. Alone, and robbed of his hunting rifle, he is befriended by neighboring Indians whom he soon comes to respect. His understanding and growing affection for the Indian boy who becomes his reluctant pupil is effectively characterized, as is the subtle realization on Matt's part that his family and other White settlers will soon displace the Indians on their former campsites. (10-13)

A Solitary Blue, *by Cynthia Voigt. Atheneum, 1983. $10.95*
Left in his father's care after his mother departs on a mission to help the less fortunate, Jeff misses her sensitivity and affection. His father, wrapped up in his academic life, seems incapable of relating to him. However, after reuniting with his mother, Melody, Jeff sees that she has hurt both him and his father, and gets tired of pleasing her. He compares himself to the solitary blue heron and works toward resolving a situation in which he feels betrayed by his mother. This story, with its scenes of confrontation, shows the complexity of family interrelationships and parent/child separations. (12 and up)

There's No Such Thing as a Chanukah Bush, Sandy, Goldstein, *by Susan Sussman. Illustrated by Charles Robinson Whitman, 1983. $7.50*
Robin wants a Christmas tree, even though she's Jewish. Grandfather helps her to understand that Jews can share other people's festivals without celebrating them at home. Warm, humorous, and respectful of various beliefs. (5-8)

To Live in Two Worlds: American Indian Youth Today, *by Brent Ashabranner. Photographs by Paul Conklin. Dodd, Mead, 1984. $12.95*

Lynn is a Navajo girl attending a New England prep school on a scholarship. Jason, a young Zuni, is in a federal prison for committing a violent crime. Through the eyes of young Indian men and women such as these, this book tells of the struggle of individuals and tribes to preserve the Indian heritage and at the same time carve out a place for themselves in the dominant culture of the country. (11-14)

Voyage, *by Adele Geras. Atheneum, 1983. $10.95*
The shipboard dramas among a group of Jewish immigrants from Europe bound for America in November, 1904 are told in a series of vignettes exploring their personal thoughts, experiences, and hopes for the future in the new land in which they hope to settle and seek their fortunes. It is a poignant and realistic depiction of faith and human experiences. (11-14)

The World's Refugees: A Test of Humanity, *by Gil Loescher and Ann Dull Loescher. Harcourt Brace Jovanovich. 13.95*
Quoting from the experiences and memories of refugees in Southeast Asia, Haiti, Africa, and the Middle East, as well as the words of doctors and relief workers, the authors present a worldwide survey of the refugee crisis. Well-chosen photographs increase the impact of this readable, clear account of a heartrending, explosive situation and its policy implications for the U.S. and the world. (12 and up)

For the complete "Human Family" book list write to:
The National Conference of Christians and Jews, 71 Fifth Ave., New York, NY 10003

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(Continued from page 175)

certain communities by intensifying atheist propaganda and anti-religious activity. A campaign launched in Dagestan in the North Caucasus in 1978 has been extended to most other Muslim areas. But atheist propaganda has proved counter-productive. The more books written, the more lectures given to "unmask Islam" and condemn such practices as fasting during Ramadan (said to be particularly harmful to school-children), the more tenaciously people are likely to cling to them.

What is ominous is that the new campaign against parallel Islam has a hard and brutal edge to it. It is being made quite clear, by references to the (eventual) efficiency of the Communists in dealing with the prolonged Basmachi revolt in the 1920s and 1930s, that "we have beaten you before and can beat you again." There has been a switch in emphasis away from friendship between the native population and their Russian "Elder Brother" towards the ability of "Elder Brother" to maintain order and eliminate various indigenous and foreign "traitors." Now, cases of terrorism and trials of so-called "religious fanatics" appear regularly in the local Central Asian media. In March 1982 Muslim groups clashed with Communist party members in several towns and villages in Central Asia. Reports spoke of major riots in towns in the North Caucasus, involving Russians as well as Muslim nationals, which were ended only by military intervention and a ten-day curfew. They also told of "wartime collaborators" being tracked down, captured, and shot.

There is also evidence of a clamp-down on religious activities. In September 1982 thirteen people went on trial in Tashkent, charged with the production and sale of Muslim religious literature. Two of the accused had already served sentences on the same charges. There continue to be denunciations of pilgrimages to holy places, many of which are the graves of local anti-Russian heroes of the last century. In 1983 the media carried stories of contemporaries, regarded by local people as living saints, describing them as charlatans interested only in taking money from the people's pockets.

The number of activists being tried is increasing. One Komsomol member, Mukhiddin, a former secretary of a collective farm on trial for his membership in Hairy Ishans, defended himself thus: "My Komsomol membership is necessary for this world, but my being a follower of religion is necessary for the next."

SOVIET INTERNAL policy towards Islam is being forced to change. The government had fostered an international image as a "defender of Islam," and had utilized the leaders of the Directorates as adept mouthpieces for a policy of rapprochement towards the Muslim world. For example, in 1979 the Soviet Union hosted a well-attended conference, a preliminary one for its 1980 Tashkent Panislamic conference, which was to celebrate the fifteenth century of Hegira (the migration of the Prophet from Mecca to Medina and the starting point of the Muslim era and calendar). Then came the invasion of Afghanistan. All but five delegations boycotted the Tashkent conference. Those five raised objections to the Soviet intervention in Afghanistan, and the conference ended in disarray. The Soviet role as "defender of Islam" had lost all credibility. Ironically, China is now taking steps to fill this role. Half of its Muslims are ethnic Chinese, and the provision of mosques is apparently adequate.

Despite the clamp-downs and growing Islamic discontent, nothing has yet curbed the soaring Muslim birth rate. By the year 2000, it is predicted, Muslims will constitute a quarter of the Soviet population, and, even more dangerous and significant, one-third of the conscripts in the Soviet armed forces. Moreover, there is widespread sympathy for Afghan Muslims, particularly among the Baltic peoples, Ukrainians, and Christian Caucasians, where national and religious opposition to Soviet rule is running high, and the necessity to send conscripts to fight Russia's war is causing deep resentment. Muslims are acquiring the most unlikely sympathizers, including Lithuanian Catholics.

Muslims in the Soviet Union have enjoyed relative political and economic security, an absence of conflict, and thanks to their own initiative, more space in which to practice Islam than would at first appear. They would be best advised to sit back and wait, and let the men in the Kremlin do the worrying.

Screen

HIT & MISS

'WITNESS' & 'MEAN SEASON'

BETWEEN Christmas and the February holiday period, several crime melodramas — some by directors of distinction and others by near amateurs — were released, each providing at least the promise of thought as well as action: *Witness*, *The Mean Season*, *The Falcon and the Snowman*, and *Blood Simple*. There was plenty of critical acclaim for the films and terms like "Hitchcockian" were a little too easily tossed around. Nevertheless, if I wasn't always frightened, I was rarely bored.

There are three things, for example, that make *Witness* admirable: its love plot, its crime angle, and its study of the Amish. On the other hand, there are three things that make *Witness* problematical: its love plot, its crime angle, and its study of the Amish. Each, especially the latter, is intriguing in its own way; together, the mix, though ambitious, is not especially convincing. Australian Director Peter Weir here addresses issues that he either wouldn't or couldn't, pursue beyond the bounds of his basic story.

Witness concerns a murder observed by a young Amish boy (Lukas Haas) traveling through Philadelphia with his mother (Kelly McGillis). It is their first venture outside Pennsylvania Dutch country, and they are proudly sent off by her father (Jan Rubes), who counsels them to "be careful of the English." The line is a marvelous touch, registering just how much the

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Amish keep their perspective and the broad view of things. Unfortunately, the child is forced to take the short view too when he witnesses a murder in the Union Station lavatory, involving him and his elders in what first appears to be some old-fashioned "English" cops-and-robbers.

Although Lukas Haas — with unaffected, wide-eyed simplicity, and a nice dose of mischief — steals this show, its star is Harrison Ford, playing John Book, the detective who first shields his Amish wards and then has to flee town with them. Ford brings to his role the potential he has always displayed in his Han Solo and Professor Indiana Jones camp-ups: here, the wildly concentrated sometimes even weird, slightly glazed look in his eyes, is mellowed appropriately and combined with some excellent comic timing. Indeed, Ford added a line to the screenplay, a witty imitation of a coffee commercial that falls flat among the uncomprehending Amish. The boy's mother being conveniently widowed, she and Ford slowly — and believably — get close. McGillis is not thoroughly Amish and has some trouble keeping sultriness repressed, but she can also be convincing, particularly when rebuking Book for "whacking" people, a word she uses with the same distaste she displays when holding his gun as if it were a dirty diaper.

Nevertheless, not all the parts of *Witness* mesh into the whole it first promises to be. In part this is because of some standard faults in the thriller genre: the bad guys are just cardboard villains, played by actors (Josef Sommer and Danny Glover) too big for the parts. McGillis loses her Amish credibility when she mounts a mini-revolt against her father with an out-of-character set of impassioned one-liners attacking the religious establishment. Finally, the music — mostly a pleasant synthesis of Vangelis and Aaron Copland — at times forces you to feel good before you're ready; one barn-building scene is robbed of all its sweat and elbow grease by superinspirational orchestration. The score was composed by Maurice Jarré, who displayed the same general excellence and periodic loss of judgment in *The Killing Fields*.

The more serious problems of *Witness* involve the use of the Amish setting itself. The actors' look is genuine enough: even ballet dancer Alexander Godunov seems authentic as McGillis's rustic suitor. But the Amish themselves would not participate in the making of the film, and now have raised ethical objections against it. Through a Lutheran minister on National Public Radio (they refuse to deal with the press directly), some have condemned what they regard as "commercial exploitation" and the inaccuracy of McGillis's representation. According to the minister, the Amish, already bemobbed by tourists (especially on the Sabbath), "have a right to be left alone," not treated "like animals in a zoo." *Witness*, he claims, "makes them open game for hunters from Hollywood who want to make an 'R' rated movie. The Amish are anything but 'R' rated." The complaint is serious and worth noting: The Amish are calling for a boycott. But this problem is as old as Plato and as recent as similar complaints over *Yentl*. To what degree can we tolerate "artistic lies," especially those dealing with the precious religious values of vulnerable minority sects? Does *Witness* use the Amish, or broadcast their values, even if in diluted form?

Such stern ethics aside, there is surely a fundamental esthetic problem with the film. All things considered, there is finally no reason for *Witness* to include the Amish at all. The movie provides a pleasant tour through a rarely studied world, and although there's a narrative cause for the trip (the murder occurs in Philadelphia), Weir provides no thematic case, no organic connection between crime and Amish subplots. Their peaceful farm country supplies a place for Ford simply to hide out — instead of, more believably, going to the FBI. The Amish assist him somewhat in the final showdown; he also softens to a degree under McGillis's influence. But he learns nothing among the Amish, nor do they learn or change because of him. That is, there is no direct interchange between the two worlds the film presents — nor even a comment on why there can't be.

One moment reveals the film's evasion. The grandfather takes the young boy aside and lectures him about the evils of guns after he has been caught playing with Ford's revolver. The older man patiently and wisely explains that only evil can come from violence, and that we must never use a gun for any reason, even against evil men. The boy doesn't buy it: mimicking the small but sure steps of logic of a seven-year-old, he says he has seen an occasion when he would have used a weapon. The dialogue concerns a hard ethical dilemma, which, to its credit, *Witness* raises in a dignified way. But it's just left there hanging. Who is right, to what degree, or when?

THE MEAN SEASON is a noteworthy failure. It starts on a compelling note. A serial killer phones a *Miami Herald* reporter; the killer likes the reporter's columns on the murders and will call in tips on his next victim. The police are naturally concerned; the reporter (Kurt Russell), who was thinking of hopping off to a quieter life in Colorado with his girlfriend (Mariel Hemingway), starts to get notions of a Pulitzer. Initially at least, *The Mean Season* offers a tale not just on how a psychopath uses the media (as Son of Sam did several years ago in New York), but also on how journalists create and participate in the news they are supposed to report.

The theme could hardly be more significant. Several years ago a similar film, *Absence of Malice*, set at the same *Miami Herald*, had dared to suggest journalists sometimes unduly invade privacy, a charge which earned it consignment to the outer darkness from some of the media. Like *Absence of Malice*, *The Mean Season* manages to use its sweltering Florida background as fit setting for the complicated corruption of those who, according to theory, are supposed to "guard the guards." Like *Absence of Malice* — at first, at least — it dares to suggest that ego, not public service, sometimes rules newsrooms, and that the First Amendment can be a very convenient stalking horse for career ambitions.

Unfortunately, *The Mean Season* lets this theme slide into poorly conceived and executed cops-and-killer. The legal and moral aspects of Russell's conversations with the killer are lost in the standard surly exchanges between the reporter and one

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of the detectives on the case. Improbabilities abound: although the police listen to tapes on the calls, they never tap the line or trace the caller's number. Director Phillip Borsos tries to spice up his stew with some standard thefts from Hitchcock: there's a shower scene from *Psycho,* and shots of the anonymous killer, only from the rear. Russell has to perform some routine chase scenes, including the old rush across a rising drawbridge and a new but hardly exciting heliboat pursuit in the Everglades. The audience at a local theater, where connoisseurship in regard to chase scenes is cultivated, started hissing; and I, although I usually have to look away at certain moments in films like this, found myself laughing instead.

Later I reconsidered. How sad it is to blow the chance to provide strong moral comment on such an entrenched and inadequately criticized institution. Like the sensational journalism it first scrutinizes, *The Mean Season* exploits an issue rather than examining it for the public good. Next review: *The Falcon and the Snowman* and *Blood Simple*.

TOM O'BRIEN

Stage

FEAR OF LYING

BETRAYAL AS A WAY OF LIFE

AT THE END of the play on the night I saw *Pack of Lies*, the man behind me turned to the woman with him and quoted E.M. Forster's line about hoping he would have the courage to betray his country if it came to a choice between that and betraying a friend. It took this play all evening, he added with a note of weary dismissal, to say what Forster got into a single sentence. I did not share the implied criticism of the play nor the assumption that an apothegm and a play could not in their various ways make the same point, but I was impressed with his neat summation of one of Hugh Whitemore's themes. Impressed, that is, until I belatedly got around to the Sunday *Times* (February 10) and discovered that Fox Butterfield had used the Forster remark as the lead to his piece on *Pack of Lies*. The woman seemed impressed, so I doubt the man cared that Whitemore's protagonist was also telling him that pretending and withholding are also forms of lying.

Whitemore's play, based on a real case, is about an ordinary English suburban couple who reluctantly allow British intelligence to use their house as a base from which to watch and eventually arrest the people across the street, members of a Russian spy ring. The lie at the heart of the pack is the cover of the nice Canadian couple, who are not Canadian, the Krogers, whose name is not Kroger — the ordinariness that allows the book dealer and his "dizzy Lizzie" of a wife to become the best friends of the even more conventional Jacksons. Lies fan out from that central lie to cover the whole play. Stewart, the man from M15, insinuates his way into the Jackson household, using the lie of partial truth, involving the Jacksons more and more deeply in an operation of which they do not approve. The life of the Jacksons, particularly Barbara, who must deal on a chatty, neighborly basis with Helen Kroger, becomes as much a cover as that of the Krogers. There are even the little lies of Thelma, one of the operatives, who will not tell her boss about the unauthorized sausages Barbara gives her for lunch, and of the Jackson daughter, who in predictable teenage fashion pretends that she has kept her promise not to ride on her young man's motor bike.

The emotional line of the play is the disintegration of Barbara Jackson. She loses control of herself as she sees her family's presumably open and direct life disappearing under the pressure of a house invaded. She comes to believe that there is no difference between her betrayal of Helen and what the Krogers have done, between Stewart's lies and the Krogers' facade. It is appropriate that her first real explosion is aimed at her daughter; when she shouts that she can never believe the girl again, the subtext shouts that she knows she can never be believed again. Whitemore is a dramatist who makes everything explicit (there are speeches directly to the audience to fill in blanks that are not really empty). I may be oversubtle in suggesting that the most important lie in the play is the one the Jacksons have been living all along: the ineffectual man seems to be head of the household and the strong woman plays the helpmate. That fiction is exploded as Bob's inability to assert himself afflicts Barbara as much as does Stewart's fastidious assertion of power. The Jacksons, marvelously played by Rosemary Harris and George N. Martin, would be a fascinating couple under any circumstances; here they are human strength that almost rescues the play from its tendency toward ideation and demonstration.

There are flaws in the play, of which the characters of Helen and Stewart are the most damaging. It is not simply that Stewart is icily articulate, careful, apparently unfeeling — a self-protective mask dictated by his trade — but, as his first speech indicates, he is condescending toward the Jacksons, his politeness almost a form of contempt. I had seen Nagle Jackson's tedious Faustian pastiche in Princeton a few days before going to *Pack of Lies* and, although Patrick McGoohan's Stewart is a great deal more effective than Barry Boys's Mephistopheles was in *Faustus in Hell*, the family

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resemblance was close enough to rob Stewart of the kind of complexity that might have enriched the play. Had he been one of those rumpled, ruined agents that recent fiction has taught us to expect in British spy stories, his behavior would have reflected institutional rather than personal indifference to the people he was using. His lies would have been less malevolent and probably more painful.

Helen Kroger is outgoing, noisy, mildly foul-mouthed, and pushily affectionate, presumably very fond of Barbara and her daughter. As written and as played by Dana Ivey, there is something false about all this conviviality. Whether or not that is intentional, I do not know. Perhaps Whitemore is sending a signal to the audience that Barbara Jackson cannot see. Perhaps he simply intends Helen to be the kind of character whose genuine excess looks fake against the restraint of its surroundings. To get the most out of the character (and that surely is the intention of the drunken Christmas scene), Helen's lie should be her spy role, her truth the friend-aunt-neighbor in her. If the audience does not believe that, Barbara is betraying nothing but her sense of her own half of a friendship.

Pack of Lies is disquieting, partly for what it has to say, even more for the promises it fails to keep. Despite its weaknesses, however, it is more complex than the man behind me suggested when he borrowed Forster from Butterfield to dazzle his companion.

GERALD WEALES

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Music

INSPIRING IMPASSE?

POLYMORPHOUS ECLECTICISM

A CLEAR DESCRIPTION of the state of the art of composing "classical" or "serious" music has been provided by Gunther Schuller, the extraordinary composer cum conductor cum historian who may receive more commissions to write new music than anyone else in the country. Music, says Schuller simply, no longer has a universal language that all composers employ and that all audiences can follow.

This situation is particularly painful by comparison with the two-and-a-half centuries that preceded World War I, when triadic harmony was in universal use in the West. Our mainstream concerts still offer mostly music of that era, and give the major composers of this century marginal status, mostly because of the growing language gap.

Various schools of musical style or language have competed for dominance in this century, Schuller points out. But no one's winning. Still Schuller foresees, or at least hopes for, some kind of convergence of musical usage, even if not as complete a unity as existed a century ago.

In the meantime, he and many others keep on composing, and do what they can in the present situation, with the answer not in clear sight. Schuller urges young composers: Give your listeners a way into the music you provide; don't stay withdrawn into the purity of your own approach.

In the context of these remarks, which Schuller has given formally and informally several times, considerable interest attended the recent East Coast premiere of his Symphony No. 3, "*Laudi Ventorum* (In Praise of Winds)," written four years ago for the University of Michigan concert band. Schuller composes with legendary rapidity, and the weight of his music varies from work to work, but his previous symphonies, the First for brass and percussion dating from1950, and the Second for orchestra from 1965, are imposing works and classics of their periods.

Ninety-five wind players (actually, a few were percussionists) assembled in Jordan Hall at the New England Conservatory in Boston to perform Schuller's Third; the composer took the podium after a brief, businesslike bow.

A slow introduction swelled darkly, something like a Romantic symphony's, but laced with sharp melodic and harmonic corners and sonically intense instrumental combinations. This rose dramatically from low register to mid-range, then leapt into a rapid, reedy theme resembling the energetic but anonymous ideas typical of American composition. But under this facade of conventional band music, a wealth of inner relationships was quickly drawn out of the two subjects and expanded into ghostly, visionary vistas again suggestive

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of the Romantics but with remarkable magic of their own.

The second movement, an elegy to the late composer Alec Wilder, began with a somber evocative chorale, atonal but fluent and neo-Romantic, its Alban Berg harmonies heightened by a dry, Stravinskian orchestration to almost unbearable intensity. An impassioned, dissonant outburst led to an eerie, haunted passage reminiscent of Schoenberg at his most atmospheric, and then to the implacable, lovely elegy again.

The scherzo movement passed itself off as a hyperactive waltz, the imposture made hilarious by melodic digressions that turned dipso through acoustical sleight of hand — some of these moments were physically dizzying to a listener. The finale put a march-fanfare through a dazzling array of instrumental and character transformations (the last was a scurrilous sort of big-band jazz), then returned to slow material of the sort that opened the symphony in a sonic swell of such intensity that one's whole inner ear resonated, and sense of balance wavered until the conductor's cutoff.

All this was composed in some version of the twelve-tone method, which originated with the Schoenberg school but which Schuller has made a pan-stylistic tool par excellence. Even more his own was the inexhaustible coloristic invention of the piece; in some passages Schuller was inventing several new sonorities a second, all structural to the magical, haunting flavor of this remarkable work.

But the real spectacle was the polymorphous eclecticism, the remarkable array of styles donned and discarded, mimicked and mocked, as this vast, creative intelligence thrashed on the hook of its own self-defined dilemma about musical language. Perhaps, if the current impasse can inspire works on this level, we should not resolve it just yet.

DAVID B. NOBLE

(David B. Noble, who writes regularly on music, previously contributed an article on the Oxford Movement to Commonweal*'s issue of July 13, 1984.)*

Books: THE MYTH IS THE MEDIUM

SPEAKING of his painting, the American artist Arthur Dove said: "We cannot express the light in nature because we have not the sun. We can only express the light we have in ourselves." It is not by accident that we have invented imagery that overcomes the limitations of language. Common to all of us is the manipulation of truth we call "poetic license."

Our lives are filled with every conceivable ploy to escape or penetrate the "ordinary." Even those of us who are most mundane despise our condition, and when we recount the simplest story it inevitably becomes something else: a "tall tale," or a "fish story." These terms are efforts to describe the remarkable interaction of imagination and something even more quixotic than imagination: that which many of us innocently call *the truth*. Clearly, tall tales are not true, and yet, even for naive realists (fundamentalist or scientistic) those who fervently believe in something as obsolescent and undependable as "the truth," such tales are not counterfeit.

The universal inclination to evoke a reality that is truer than the one before us—even the everyday creation of tall tales—is simply the most commonplace aspect of a profound disposition of the human psyche: the making of myths.

THE WAY OF THE ANIMAL POWERS

VOL. I: HISTORICAL ATLAS OF WORLD MYTHOLOGY

Joseph Campbell

Alfred van der Marck/Harper & Row, $75, 300 pp.

PRE-COLUMBIAN ART

Jose Alcina Franch

Harry N. Abrams, $125, 618 pp.

Jamake Highwater

Joseph Campbell tells us that "it is a curious characteristic of our unformed species that we live and model our lives through acts of make-believe." We are myth makers. We are legenders. Of all the animals we alone are capable of dreaming ourselves into existence.

Campbell's *The Way of the Animal Powers* is a masterful presentation of the imaginal miracle that lies behind the term "shamanism"—an excellent and insightful description of those animistic, hunting cultures that have survived into our own century and which may reflect dimly upon our Paleolithic ancestors: the Bushmen, Pygmies, Andamanese, Tasaday, Australian Aborigines, Native Americans, and many others. *The Way of the Animal Powers* is about dreams and myths and the countless, ingenious ways in which we ritualize the ineffable cosmos as social as well as personal experiences. This concern for personal myths and their dynamic interface with the myths of the community is especially important in our time when society is no longer supported by a truly pervasive and significant system of beliefs. It is a time when the creative impulse has been internalized and has few resources in the external world. It attests to the fact that even our mythologies must be dynamic if they and, through them, we are to survive. The power of the dream is still in the capacity for dreaming.

Campbell tells us that the first function of a mythology is to waken and maintain in the individual a sense of wonder and participation in the mystery of this finally inscrutable universe. "Mythologies differ as the horizons, landscapes, sciences and technologies of their civilizations differ." The essential function of mythologies is the instruction of the group and the individual in "the passages of human life, from the stage of dependency in childhood to the responsibilities of maturity, and on to old age and the ultimate passage of the dark gate."

The process by which this complex network of myth and ritual makes itself visible and effective is metaphoric, poetic, imaginal. At its simplest it is the

(Continued on page 187)

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Religious booknotes

Lonergan's diverse value

Mary Gerhart

SCANNING a tape recording of an undergraduate seminar led by Bernard Lonergan in 1976, I found the following exchange. "What do you understand by revelation?" asked one of the participants. "It all depends. . ." (Lonergan pauses), "it all depends on whether you want the personal experience of revelation or whether you want to know it in relation to other things."

One reason why Lonergan's work has attracted thinkers within and outside of religion is the general usefulness of his basic distinctions, such as the one implied above between common sense and theory. Nine books published within the last two years suggest that his work as a whole is capable of diverse applications.

Faith, Feminism, and the Christ, by Patricia Wilson-Kastner, Fortress Press, $8.95, 147 pp.

In *Faith, Feminism, and the Christ*, Patricia Wilson-Kastner constructs a feminist theology from the premise that "there is nothing exclusively male or female about clear thinking about personal experience." Although she cites Lonergan only once, the book clearly illustrates Lonergan's rationale for method in theology. This is one of the finest books thus far on feminist theology. In touch with the leading edges of feminist theological developments, Wilson-Kastner outlines "the main lines of a theological exploration of human knowing which . . . is respectful of the insights of feminism and also coherent enough to provide an adequate base for exploring the theological questions that need to be addressed." Complex but never pedantic, the argument is clear and generous. The chapter on christology affords the reader an opportunity to reclaim the doctrine on credible historical and religious grounds.

Richard Viladesau's introduction to Christian anthropology, entitled *The Reason for Our Hope*, takes the "philosophical turn to the subject" as the hallmark for credible contemporary claims about God. Using the criteria of relevance, integration, radicality, and praxis, Viladesau presents a coherent review of the question. His exposition draws upon Lonergan and others in the transcendental tradition and is heightened by the frequent juxtaposition of a quotation from Scripture with one from another source. The chapter, "Transcendence without God," functions not only as an excellent review of non-theistic positions but as a negative but "provisional confirmation" of his presupposition that the question of God can be answered affirmatively.

The Reason for Our Hope: An Introduction to Christian Anthropology, by Richard Viladesau, Paulist Press, $10.95, 240 pp.

In his commendably brief account of mysticism, *What Are They Saying About Mysticism?*, Harvey D. Egan calls upon Rahner as well as Lonergan. In Rahner, Egan finds the means to overcome both the Continental Protestant suspicion that mysticism is a religious aberration and the Catholic separation of mystical theology from other theology. In Lonergan, Egan finds a "solid methodological basis" for a transposition of traditional mystical theology into a contemporary framework. He speaks of Lonergan's theology as being an "incipient" or "future" mystical theology. For this development, Egan thinks that Lonergan's concept of faith as unrestricted being-in-love could be the basis for understanding the "transcultural dimension of the world's great religions."

What Are They Saying About Mysticism?, by Harvey D. Egan, Paulist Press, $3.95, 134 pp.

A transcultural basis for religious understanding is developed by Vernon Gregson in his forthcoming *Lonergan, Spirituality, and the Meeting of Religions*. Gregson notices that, in spite of all the East-West dialogues, thus far no "theology or style of religious thinking" has succeeded in providing a cognitive basis for the communality of Eastern and Western religions. This study of Lonergan is special in that it is intended for believers of different religious traditions who wish to develop a common dialogue among themselves. For this task, Lonergan's work is presented both as a "therapy of interiority" (enabling the theologian to do cognitional analysis) and as a reflection on religious conversion as a foundation of religion (providing a theoretical understanding).

Lonergan, Spirituality, and the Meeting of Religions, by Vernon Gregson (Introduction by Sebastian Moore), College Theological Society/University Press of America, forthcoming.

Another application of Lonergan's work as "therapy" is found in *Christotherapy II: A New Horizon for Counselors, Spiritual Directors, and Seekers of Healing and Growth in Christ* by Bernard J. Tyrrell. The goal of the book is to use "valid insights of secular psychology and therapy as a means of making explicit authentic

Christotherapy II: A New Horizon for Counselors, Spiritual Directors and Seekers of Healing and Growth in Christ, by Bernard J. Tyrrell, Paulist Press, $8.95, 337 pp.

MARY GERHART *teaches hermeneutics, religion, and literature at Hobart and William Smith Colleges in Geneva, New York.*

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psychotherapeutic dimensions present in Christ's revelation." The *ideal* Christotherapist is a "person who possesses equal competency in the areas of . . . [psychotherapy] and spiritual directing and has integrated

Why Doctrines? by Charles C. Hefling, Jr., Cowley Publications, $8.00, 196 pp.

the theories and methods of the two spheres in such a fashion that . . . he or she functions as a 'Christian Integrationist.' " In addition to synthesizing psychological and spiritual insight, this book has good critical-constructive readings of Jung, Ignatius, Hora, Frankl, and others.

Why Doctrines? by Charles C. Hefling, Jr. is a lively exploration of the relationship between doctrine and faith. According to Hefling, neither the skeleton nor the jellyfish—for different reasons—can dance, just as neither doctrinal affirmations without faith nor faith without expression in belief can manifest true religion. Doctrine is heuristic in the sense that "religious conversion kindles a fire that gives light as well as heat; it does change the mind, because it changes the heart." Hefling argues that doctrine is a matter-of-fact necessity—promoted by and promoting commu-

What Are They Saying About Moral Norms?, by Richard M. Gula, Paulist Press, $3.95, 129 pp.

nity. He extends Lonergan's work on doctrine with analogies drawn from literature and the everyday.

In *What Are They Saying About Moral Norms*?, Richard M. Gula invokes Lonergan's work to explicate the relationship between reality and the human capacity to know in what Gula calls the "new context" for doing moral theology. Three models are explicated: strict consequentialist (Fletcher), mixed consequentialist or revisionist (Knauer, Schuller, Fuchs, Janssens, McCormick), and deontologist (Grisez, May). The concept of natural law is examined for its bias toward physicalism over personalism. Gula also discusses the presumption in favor of the episcopal magisterium on disputed issues: he advances three reasons for the presumption without thereby denying the right of theologians to dissent.

Mark Morelli attempts, in *Philosophy's Place in Culture: A Model*, to schematize terms commonly employed in contemporary discourse but uncommonly resistant to clarification—terms like "horizon," "philosophy," "culture," "standpoint." He proposes "to carve out a cultural niche for philosophers." Horizon-analysis as discussed in Lonergan's unpublished manuscripts is taken as the basis for distinguishing among six horizons (one ordinary horizon and five extraordinary ones: artistic, scientific, philosophic, scholarly, religious) which have emerged in our time. Morelli has in-

Philosophy's Place in Culture: A Model, by Mark D. Morelli, University Press of America, $22.00, 154 pp.

sightful analyses of other philosophers on the issues of horizon and world: William James, George Santayana, John Henry Newman. In constructing the notion of a "constellation of horizons" and in analyzing the view of ordinary subjects perceiving extraordinary horizons, Morelli finds much that is "worthy of suspicion" as well as of belief.

William Shea's scholarly study of

The Naturalists and the Supernatural: Studies in Horizon and an American Philosophy of Religion, by William M. Shea, Mercer University Press, $21.50, 244 pp.

the tradition of American naturalism, *The Naturalists and the Supernatural*, is a "dialogue between philosophical worlds." It is a friendly interpretation of naturalism in that, although Shea expresses a fear that contemporary philosophers who count themselves in that tradition may have become dogmatic, he values its basic tenets and finds it compatible with a religious interpretation. George Santayana, John Dewey, Frederick Woodbridge, and John Randall are each the subject of a chapter. The heart of the thesis is in the last chapter where Shea examines in detail three definitions of "supernatural." He argues that the naturalists and contemporary theologians could agree on their rejection of the "supernatural," as understood in the first two definitions, and on the meaning and value of the supernatural in the third definition.

The diversity of these books also illustrates Lonergan's bold claim, ". . . understand what it is to understand and you . . . will understand the broad lines of all there is to be understood." However audacious and even quixotic this statement seems to be on a first reading, what it claims about the partial *and* real intelligibility of the world is one of the best-kept secrets of humankind.

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C.W. Pratt

Evening Meditation in a Cathedral Town

Transparent on transparency,
A lacewing on the windowpane.
Pale green traceries of vein
In the lancets of its wings sustain
A membrane too fine for the eye.
As tranquil on the mystery
Of glass as if taught by its wings
How to put faith in invisible things,
In slow sweeps back and forth it swings
Its frail antennae thoughtfully,
Like compasses that leave no mark:
Geometers imagining the arc.

In the cathedral treasury
I've gazed, unmoved, at the Virgin's shift,
Draped like dead insect wings — enough,
The histories repeat, to lift
That heap of masonry so high.
Others believed in it; now I
Where the great stained windows raise
Their winged parabolas of praise
Day after day can bring to graze,
Sheepish, my agnostic eye.
Such precious straining of the light
Surprises stone and souls of stone to flight.

Small concentration of the evening air,
Lacewing, I look through you and glass to where
Beyond the fields the late sun condescends
To denseness, and its true brightness bends
And bursts to beauty where the transparent ends.

C.W. Pratt

Balloon Flight

The surprising joy of
Being robbed! After the first dizzying
Sense of violation,
Of being so crudely *known*,
And after the bored
Detective had listed our losses,
And we'd gone to the consulate,
And canceled our credit cards,

The sudden recognition, driving north from Barcelona
In our rented car—
Not stolen! A mercy!—
That three hours of looking at the divine
Melancholy of Christ
Crucified in polychrome, of a saint unzipped by the saw,
Of Mary grave with private knowledge,
Were worth more than a thief could imagine wanting.

And then, crossing the border
Without passport,
Waved on by the indifferent guard,
An elation as of ballast cast off,
As of floating upwards together, free,
Windborne, anonymous,
Nothing left to lose
But each other.

Theodore Deppe

Starry Night on the Rhone

Already
two years before your death
night has come to seem
far more alive
and richly colored
than the day.
With four candles
burning on the brim
of your hat
you set up your canvas
on the far bank
of the Rhone
painting stars that come
down closer
than the town.
The Great
Bear of Arles
becomes
the slow
painful curve
you use
to suture up
the dark flaps
of the night.

Evelyn Mattern

Barclay's Pond

See this dependent world: look first at
the pond birds flying underneath us,
wings rippling in the floating sky;
then at the shell-shaped island
hanging by its knees in the center,
a slightly cupped palm for cattails,
willows beginning, grasses, and
cowbird feathers caught on dead branches.

Finally, when you have noted well
the old rowboat beached at the edge,
its waterproof companion pointed towards
the underworld,
pure and fitting craft for the journey,
lose yourself at last in the sky underneath,
its very existence attending upon
your refusal to stick your foot in it.

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telling of tall tales, at its most profound, the creation of masterworks of art.

Campbell is himself a legender who speaks to us through an exceptional amalgam of scholarship and imagination. The sweep and scope of his new book is truly astonishing. We follow him through time and geography, examining the traces of early mankind: the first human burials, the artifacts of a worldwide cult of animal powers, details imprinted in temple-caves, upon rock face, and on fragments of bone and shell.

We may not wish to follow Campbell step by step. We may decline his assumption that we can know our ancestry through the examination of twentieth-century aboriginal peoples. And we may not be inclined to accept the Jungian insistence upon the "spiritual unity" of human beings. But these are small matters, indeed, in comparison to the epic intellect and imagination which functions at the heart of Joseph Campbell's brilliant new book. It is surely the culmination of his life's work, and we can only look forward with great anticipation to the remaining volumes in the series.

The Way of the Animal Powers requires a special note of praise in regard to its achievements in the field of bookmaking. Campbell's text is handsomely integrated with a lavish series of color plates, full-color maps, drawings, black and white photographs, and charts. The physical book itself is certainly one of the finest examples of exquisite bookmaking which not only complements the text but, in a valid sense, extends its imaginal and scholarly reach in a manner that is possible only with the most ingenious artistic efforts.

The art of producing sumptuous books is also evident in *Pre-Columbian Art* by Jose Alcina Franch, a professor in the Department of American Anthropology and Ethnology at the University of Madrid. Though the text is finely wrought and instructive, it definitely serves a subordinate role in relation to the glorious illustrations: over one thousand of them, of which 177 are in full-color! In fact the real achievement of this book is its conceptual dependence upon pictures and captions as a form of communication. For *Pre-Columbian Art* is not simply a coffee table book; it is a valid and remarkable pictorial encyclopedia of the pre-Columbian arts of Mexico, Central, and South America. Its designers have conscientiously produced a cinematic experience for the reader, even to the the extent of providing a one-hundred page photo-montage of aesthetically, graphically, and historically interrelated black and white photographs entitled "The Image as Document."

Yet another sequence of drawing, text and photographs is a survey of principal archaeological sites, while the major portion of the book, however, consists of 360 glorious pages of full-color plates and captions. An index, bibliography, series of chronological tables and maps, along with a list of major Maya and Aztec deities and rulers helps readers and researchers find their way through this outstanding visual presentation of the arts that sprang from the unique cosmologies of pre-Columbian America.

Conceptual and pictorial bookmaking is not, however, the ultimate thrust of *Pre-Columbian Art*. At the book's foundation is hidden the same myth-making that we are skillfully helped to discover in Joseph Campbell's luminous writing. Art for the pre-Columbian peoples of the Americas was many things: monumental displays of political muscle, designations of social rank, a medium of exchange, and a form of tender which determined wealth and power. But it was also born of and supported by a complex mythology which was the basis of an all-encompassing religiosity. We cannot fail to recognize among the sumptuous images of *Pre-Columbian Art* a revelation which is probably one of the greatest realizations of the twentieth century: that mythologies and the arts reflecting them are the anvil upon which human mentality distinguishes itself, upon which it names itself, and ultimately knows itself.

Ezra Pound, in 1937, wrote that "it has taken us two thousand years to get round again to meditating on mythology." Almost fifty years later, this remark is still powerfully suggestive. As Herbert L. Schneidau has said, "It may be that the most important development of twentieth-century consciousness has to do not with atom bombs or moon

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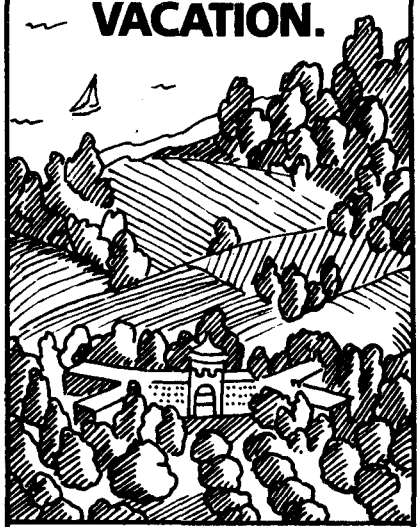

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walks, but with a new seriousness toward prehistory and mythology." We have rediscovered the capacity to recognize realities which exist outside our own empiricist frame of mind, and we have developed an eye which permits us to see—through the "primitivist" works of Picasso and Mondrian—the hitherto neglected aesthetic achievements of primal artists and societies. It is this realization of the intricate interface between mythology and art that is the legacy of Joseph Campbell. And it is the reason he can speak to us so compellingly about both the ancient cosmologies found in myth and the ultramodern cosmologies discovered in the writings of James Joyce.

We do not have the sun, and yet we must have a light so we can find our way through the unspeakable darkness of our inscrutable cosmos. The imagination illuminates and, finally, defines our *only* reality—the only truth we can know. That light is a mythic lantern. And the world that it illuminates for us is the realm of ritual by which we know ourselves and what we have been and what we are becoming. "We can only express the light we have in ourselves."

Hope for this hour

A MAN IN THREE WORLDS
Andre Chouraqui
Translated by Kenton Kilmer
University Press of America,
$22.50, $10.75 paper, 234 pp.

Michael Zeik

THE REALIST is the one who sees miracles.

So asserts Andre Chouraqui, Israeli writer/statesman/theologian; emigrant from Algeria (who loves Arabs); member of the Resistance in Vichy France (who loves Frenchmen); survivor of a Sephardic family exiled by the Spanish Inquisition (who loves Christians). This is a remarkable story of a remarkable man, in a translation that renders both accessible.

Chouraqui, who served both as advisor to Ben Gurion, and as Deputy Mayor of Jerusalem under Teddy Kollek, was laughed at and ridiculed by "realists" after the Six-Day War in 1967, for his famous *Lettre à un Ami Arabe*, in which he put forth an all-encompassing peace proposal. Perhaps the least surprised Jew in Israel, however, he lived to see Anwar Sadat in Jerusalem, addressing an astonished Knesset. He is certain, moreover, that Sadat's bold venture represents only the first step of a general peace settlement in the Middle East. But to read this book as a political treatise alone, would be to ignore the humanistic mass of theology, history, and poetry which undergirds it; politics, here, is but the tip of the iceberg.

Contrary to both Albert Einstein and Bertrand Russell — to mention only two of the more distinguished cosmic-pessimists of our century — Chouraqui thinks the human race is going to make it through its primitive nuclear era. Why this hope? Why this conviction that miracles are the vertebrae of reality? Because, in one lifetime, he has lived through both the Jewish resurrection (from Auschwitz to Holy Land); and the Christian pentecost: that outpouring of Spirit in the Second Vatican Council which, among other things, reversed the pervasive two-thousand-year-old tradition of doctrinal anti-Semitism.

If such things can happen, given the greed, lust, hate, sloth, and general animality of the human race, reasons Chouraqui, then even Isaiah might be right: after all, the lion and the lamb are still evolving.

A spark of the creative love of God, who beheld the completed universe and called it (not good, but) *very* good, kindles this author. Having personally suffered at the hands of Arabs, Frenchmen, and Christians in general, he feels himself also blessed by his contact with all of them; he is truly a man not of one world (Israel), but of three.

Consider his relationship with the Arab culture of his childhood. It is generally acknowledged that the "oriental" or Sephardic Jews who emigrated from Arab lands, are the most hawkish in Israel; ardent supporters of the Likud since 1973, and members of the Herut bloc before that. Having suffered under Arab domination once, they see any political compromise with the Arabs as moral compromise as well.

Not so Chouraqui, who points out that for 1200 years, right up to the Twentieth Century, the Sephardic Jews, unlike their Ashkenazi brothers in Christian Europe, who were forever being expelled from one country to another, lived in comparative security, and developed a flourishing religious and cultural tradition in the Middle East. Jews (and Christians) in Muslim lands were recognized as *dhimmi* (protected), since they were the "People of the Book" — people whose scriptures Mohammed, himself, had confirmed. Unlike pagans, they were not to be converted by force. (This is true enough, though as a historian I would add that lenience to Jews varied from Caliph to Caliph; from Sultan to Sultan.)

The vitality of Sephardic Jewish culture, so "Arab" in many ways, delighted the author, whose description of his childhood constitutes one long verbal caress. He tells us the story of his maternal grandfather, "Baba." Baba's faith in the living God and the intercessory powers of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob were legendary — as was his ingenuity in times of crisis. Once, during the period of the Dreyfus Affair, when there were outbreaks of French-inspired anti-Jewish rioting in Algeria, he quickly assembled all the Jews of his town, and marched them through the streets, chanting: "Down with the Jews, Down with the Jews. We have to hang them by the nose."

The resulting laughter of the populace

REVIEWERS

JAMAKE HIGHWATER*'s most recent book is* Arts of the Indian Americas: Leaves from the Sacred Tree *(Harper and Row). He also created a series for PBS called "Native Land," a survey of American Indian civilizations.*

MICHAEL ZEIK *teaches in the history department at Marymount College, Tarrytown.*

DANIEL M. MURTAUGH, *formerly an associate editor of* Commonweal, *now works in the Treasurer's Division of W.R. Grace and Company.*

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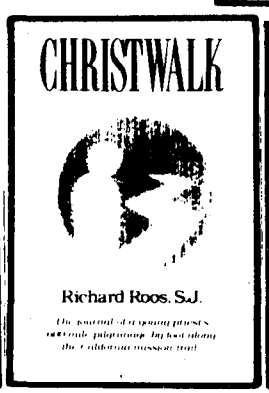
defused the situation, and the ringleaders realized that their own noses had been pulled.

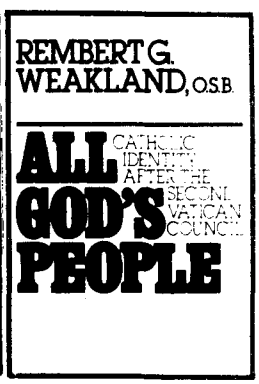
But neither could Chouraqui harbor resentful thoughts regarding the French. "Our forefathers, the Gauls, were big, brave, strong, and quarrelsome." Those were the words that young André, together with his Arab, Spanish, Jewish, and Negro fellow students, chanted out loud under the supervision of both his nuns in kindergarten and his lay teachers in Algerian public school. Algeria was French; France was motherland. The Druid priests, the Cathedrals of Chartres and Paris, the exploits of Napoleon Bonaparte, all were their inheritance. Trained at the Sorbonne, Chouraqui felt, until the Vichy collaboration with the Nazis, that he was truly an adopted son of France. But it is useless to dwell on the injustices of the past, he insists. Gazing backwards, Lot's wife turned into a pillar of salt.

What, then, is Chouraqui's audacious, all-encompassing plan for peace in the Middle East? It is exactly the opposite of the partition proposal laid down by the United Nations in 1947 — a proposal on which the writer invokes the judgment of Solomon: if you partition the child, each mother will receive half a corpse. Rather than separating the territories while leaving the nationalities mixed, Chouraqui would unite the territories but separate the nationalities. That is to say, he wants to "leap-frog" the present impasse between Arab and Jew, by a daring Federation of the Jordanian, Israeli, and Palestinian populations: a United States of the Near East! Allow the separate populations to express themselves through autonomous political and cultural entities, he urges, but let them do this within a larger political federation. Chouraqui views monolithic, static sovereignty as part of the outworn history of Europe; the principles of Common Market and Federation are the global hope for the future. Farfetched? Unlikely? So, too, he would answer, are the existence of Israel, the decrees of the Second Vatican Council, and the visitation of Anwar Sadat.

But if a fusion of Arab oil, wealth, and population with Israeli technology and energy, would bring about a prosperous

SPRING HIGHLIGHTS





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Middle East and, indeed, a more peaceful world, what would result from the definitive, lasting reconciliation between Christian and Jew?

It is here that Chouraqui's voice, intense throughout, attains truly prophetic pitch. "For if their (Israel's) rejection has meant the reconciliation of the world," he writes, quoting St. Paul (Romans 11:15), "what will their acceptance mean? *Nothing less than life from the dead.*" For in a world afflicted by the starvation and poverty of whole continents, and endangered by the nuclear fry/freeze of the entire planet, what might be accomplished by the concerted voice, will, and action of *all* the "Peoples of the Book?"

It will not be possible in the space allotted for this review to do justice to what he has to say on this subject. Let me simply point out that while he warns Christians against their neurotic repression of the Jewishness of Jesus and his teachings, his apostles, and the early church, he admonishes Jews also, that through twenty centuries they

> have acted as though Jesus, of whom they often make themselves a distorted picture, had never existed; and as though the church, faced with the impossible task of converting the nations of the earth to the God of Abraham, had never done anything but persecute them . . . The church must bring back to life its Hebrew roots . . . The Jews must discover the values of the Christian world and the face of Jesus their brother, whose true name is Ieshua ben Iosseph; and learn to see in the New Testament the flesh of their flesh, a text devised and proclaimed in Hebrew, that has sowed throughout the pagan world, the hope of a salvation announced by the prophets of Israel.

This book was published in 1984. George Orwell did not predict it.

The Milosz mines

THE LAND OF ULRO

Czeslaw Milosz

Farrar Straus Giroux, $17.95, 287 pp.

Daniel M. Murtaugh

PROFESSOR Milosz and I approach each other warily. "Dear Reader," he begins, "this book was not intended for you, and I feel you should be forewarned before you enter its bizarre tangle." He "indulged a personal whim" in writing it. Instead of explaining his Polish heritage to a world largely ignorant of it, he will meditate upon his uncomfortable relationship to that world, bringing to bear upon his theme those cultural references which he knows will be opaque to most of his readers.

I am his intended reader for whom the book was not intended. I had no knowledge of Polish literature when I began this book, although I have now read *Forefathers' Eve* by Adam Mickiewicz and *The Marriage* by Witold Gombrowicz and am the richer for it. Still, the obstacles posed by my ignorance of Polish literature have proven to be relatively trivial. Milosz seems to have counted on that. His "perverse ambition," he tells us is to cite "an unorthodox tradition" in order to "say something urgent in a language at once intellectually lucid and evocative. . . ."

The obstacle that remains is his method of argument. He has chosen to follow the association of ideas that his mind spontaneously presents to him, or at least to give the appearance of doing so. What should result is an argument whose shape and coherence are compelling because they are identical with his own *forma mentis*. What does result, with me at least, is recurrent irritation. At its worst, Milosz's method is self-indulgent and self-important.

Still, the mind and the argument that he displays are worth knowing. His theme is the "disinherited mind," a term that he borrows from Erich Heller. The industrial and scientific revolutions of the eighteenth century diminished humankind by transporting us to a universe without a center and by sundering truth and value. At the most basic level, we lost a heaven and hell we could point to and found ourselves adrift on an earth which had become William Blake's Land of Ulro, a realm of disembodied ratiocination which revealed itself only at the cost of our humanity.

Milosz's personal experience of this disinheritance takes the mythic form of a search for a spiritual father, the Lithuanian-born poet-diplomat Oscar Milosz who wrote in French, principally in the twenties and thirties. Partly this search is presented as narrative and memory. The author's one meeting with his distant relative comes back to him in the gratifying reflection of a letter from the elder Milosz to someone else: he had found the younger Milosz a promising lad. The elder Milosz's journey in 1922 to Lithuania, the ancestral land he had never known, comes to the author and to us in letters read years later in the Bibliothèque Sainte Geneviève.

The principal recovery of this ancestor, however, is not narrative but expository. In presenting to us the metaphysical system of two prose-poems of Oscar Milosz, Czeslaw Milosz brings us a view of the cosmos as something other than Newton's absolute space, that context for infinitely expanded random motion. Space becomes, in Oscar Milosz's vision, something defined by motion, born of our essential human need to situate ourselves, taking its form from

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the arc of the arm.

Czeslaw Milosz brings us to his cousin's poems by way of the predecessor systems of Swedenborg and Blake as well as the poetry of Adam Mickiewicz with its heterodox blend of Polish folk traditions and Catholicism. And he notes, without pursuing the point as far as I would have liked, that his spiritual father's enterprise was ultimately endorsed by science in the thought of Albert Einstein.

In an odd way this book came to remind me of *The Education of Henry Adams*, a book I would recommend to Professor Milosz if he has not already read it. An earlier formulation of the dilemma of the disinherited mind, it brings the theme to a focus in the contrary images of the Virgin and the Dynamo, the first representing the medieval view of the universe as the expression of a personal God and the object of the mother love of Mary, the latter representing the impersonal vigor of the mechanistic tradition that supplanted the medieval view. Like Milosz, Adams embodies this theme in a personal history and finds in an ancestor, his grandfather John Quincy Adams, traces of a lost and more congenial world. Readers who responded to Adams's book, with its special demands, will be rewarded by *The Land of Ulro* even if they share some of my reservations about it.

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Correspondence

(Continued from page 162)

editions by state publishing houses. Unfortunately very little of this is reported in the West, even in the religious press.

I don't want to suggest that I am not disturbed about what has happened, and is still happening, to Fr. Yakunin. I have no doubt he is a very brave man. But I regret that he is cast in this article as the one brave and right-thinking person in his church, and that others are so easily condemned whose faith and devotion are also extremely deep. This kind of reporting fits too comfortably into the cold war.

JIM FOREST

Vatican stereo

West Glacier, Mont.

To the Editors: Your editorial "Is Rome Anti-Catholic?" [January 11] may not be hyperbolic at all. "Rome" these days seems to mean Ratzinger, whom *Newsweek* calls the Inquisitor. Notice how, in his recent interview, Ratzinger has disposed of Catholics: Those in Western Europe are of no account whatever, those in Canada and the U.S. are hardly any better, those in Latin America are no-good liberationists, and those in Africa and Asia are ruled out for who-knows-what. That leaves the true Catholics in Poland. Well, things have improved a little. Victims of the Inquisition are no longer wiped out with bonfires but with stereotypes.

JACK HOLTERMAN

First-rate cream

Washington, D.C.

To the Editors: Life is too short to read, with equal attention and care, every editorial, article, book review, and letter in any one issue of even the best of our periodicals, Catholic or secular. If only for lack of time, one has to be content to skim off the cream and let it go at that.

The February 8 issue of *Commonweal* was the rare exception in this regard. It was worth the price of a year's subscription. Seldom does one find so much first-rate material in one issue of a magazine.

MSGR. GEORGE G. HIGGINS

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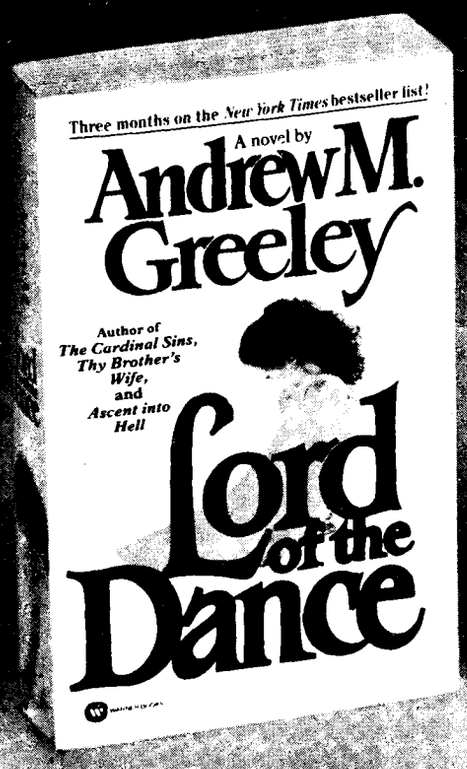

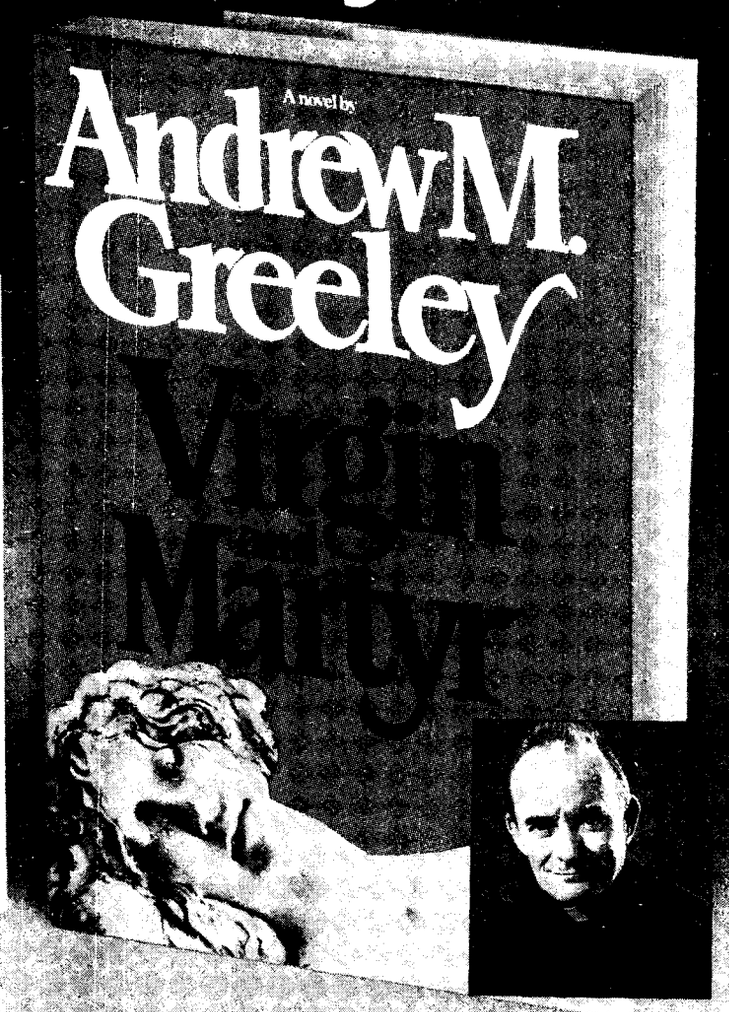

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